

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Training in Wales

THE INSPECTION OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN BEFORE COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

NURSERY REPORT ON CYLCH MEITHRIN DEWI SANT RISCA

Registered Inspector: Martin Cray

Date of inspection: 4/5 December 2006 (mornings)

Contract number: T/007/06N

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REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF NURSERY SETTINGS IN THE NON-MAINTAINED SECTOR

Name of nursery setting: Cylch Meithrin Dewi Sant

Address: St David's Church Hall

Elm Drive Tŷ Sign Risca

Post code: NP11 6PD

Telephone: 07974 271323

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Cheri Ham

Position: Leader

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all inspection judgements. Grade definitions are:

Grade 1 good with outstanding features

Grade 2 good features and no important shortcomings

Grade 3 good features outweigh shortcomings

Grade 4 some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Grade 5 many important shortcomings

1.0 CONTEXT OF THE SETTING

Context of the nursery setting:

This Welsh medium cylch meithrin is held in St David's Church Hall in the $T\hat{y}$ Sign area above the town of Risca. The nursery serves a very large housing estate and its surrounding area which is acknowledged as being socially deprived with a high level of unemployment.

The nursery is run by a management committee and is an education provider as a member of the Caerphilly County Borough Council Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is also a registered member of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

The nursery is open for four sessions per week, with 30 children betwen two and a half and three years of age currently on the register. Nine children have reached the age of three during the course of the Autumn term and as the Cylch is an approved setting, these will now qualify for funding at the beginning of the 2007 Spring term. At the time of the inspection there were no children in attendance who qualified for a funded place.

The nursery does provide for children with additional learning needs, but at the time of the inspection there were none on the register.

All the children come from the local area and English is the language spoken in each of their homes. At the time of the inspection there was one child on roll from a minority ethnic background.

The nursery has exclusive use of a spacious hall and there is a separate kitchen and toilets. The hall is used regularly for physical activities, but there are no outdoor play facilities available on site for the children.

The nursery is staffed by a total of five experienced staff members, including the leader. Currently, two have achieved Level 3 qualification in Child Care whilst others have registered for Level 2 training in 2007. Staff members have a good basic understanding of Welsh.

The Cylch Ti a Fi group meets on the same site for one afternoon a week and there is a close relationship between the two settings. After leaving the nursery, nearly all the children transfer to the nearby English medium primary school as the nearest Welsh medium provision is a considerable distance away and the local authority does not provide for their transport.

The nursery was inspected by the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales in November 2006. This is the first time that Cylch Meithrin Dewi Sant has been inspected by Estyn.

The inspection was held on the mornings of the 4th and 5th of December 2006.

2.0 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the desirable outcomes for children's learning.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Six areas of Learning	Grade for under-fives
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Grade 3
Personal and Social Development	Grade 2
Mathematical Development	Grade 2
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Grade 2
Physical Development	Grade 2
Creative Development	Grade 2

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of Education	Grade for under fives
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Grade 2
Quality of planning for children's learning.	Grade 2
Quality of teaching.	Grade 2
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reporting to parents and carers.	Grade 3
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community.	Grade 2
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	Grade 2
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	Not applicable

3.0 THE STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN IN THE SIX AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds and standards achieved by 4-5 year-olds

3.1 Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Good features

Overall, the children listen well to to adults' instructions and presentations. They show a satisfactory recall of songs and nursery rhymes taught to them. They use an increasing range of Welsh words, including numbers and colours. The children show an interest in books, handle them correctly and some offer simple observations on the pictures in stories such as Bili Broga. They enjoy marking and basic writing experiences and display an increasing mastery when using equipment such as pencils, crayons and chalk for different purposes. Children come to recognise their names and some letters.

Shortcomings

The children's ability to ask questions and make responses in Welsh, together with their use of sentence patterns, are limited.

3.2 Personal and Social Development

Good features

The children work and play together happily and at an early age they become familiar with, and show confidence in, the nursery's procedures. Overall, behaviour is consistently good; children are very caring and are happy to wait their turn as seen during snack times and when having to share resources. They display an increasing ability to concentrate and persevere with their tasks. They take responsibility for personal hygiene and come to be able to dress themselves with increasing independence. They know they have a responsibility to tidy up and put away resources before moving on to the next activity. Children respond positively to a range of cultural experiences, including the celebration of St David's Day and other festivals. They are developing well as independent learners.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.3 Mathematical Development

Good features

The children come to correctly recognise numbers up to 5, and count up to 10 and beyond. They are able to sort, count, compare and match familiar objects, and come to recognise two-dimensional shapes such as a circle, square, rectangle and triangle, drawing them correctly in rice. Their understanding of the concept of time is developing appropriately as they take part in everyday activities, such as snack time and when it is time to go home. They develop their understanding of capacity and mass when playing with sand and water. Through role-play they come to understand the purpose of money.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.4 Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Good features

The children have a good understanding of the seasons and their features. They begin to appreciate the importance of the environment, and by planting cress seeds have come to understand the conditions plants require to grow healthily. They have also studied the life-cycle of the frog. They recognise those people who help in society, such as the lollipop lady, policeman, nurse and doctor. They have a good understanding of the different types of homes in the locality and recognise different types of weather. Their understanding of healthy eating is developing well and have made their own sandwiches and fruit salad. The children's awareness of different types of materials is developed through their work on floating and sinking.

Shortcomings

Children's information technology skills are not sufficiently well developed.

3.5 Physical Development

Good features

The children display increasingly good skills in handling scissors, brushes, pencils, crayons and printing equipment. They have a good awareness of their bodies as they run, walk and jump in various activities. They respond well to directions and use space effectively as they move about the hall confidently, safely, and with increasing control and co-ordination. They use their pushing and pedalling skills well as they steer their bicycles, tractors, cars and pushchairs across the floor-space.

Shortcomings

The children's opportunities to develop their skills in outdoor physical activities are limited.

3.6 Creative Development

Good features

The children have a developing understanding of a good range of Welsh songs and rhymes, making appropriate gestures and movements as they follow the teaching. They display an ability to sing softly and loudly as required. They enjoy rhythm and in general they are able to keep a good beat when creating simple music with percussion instruments.

The children use materials such as paint, card and fabric to make pictures, collages and models. They recognise the names of primary colours and make their own choices when producing work. They enjoy role-play and make good use of their imagination when acting out a street scenario that involves, a lollipop lady, zebra crossing, traffic lights and cars.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.0 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds and for 4-5 year-olds

4.1 The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Good features

The children's awareness of different cultures is developing well as they celebrate festivals such as Divali, together with a variety of activities across the curriculum. They are introduced appropriately to Welsh culture and traditions such the singing of the National Anthem and actively celebrate St David's Day. They are taught to work and play together and they know what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They learn to be grateful and are familiar with saying simple prayers of thanks before eating their mid-morning snacks.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

Good features

Curriculum planning is based on a two-year cycle of termly or half-termly themes such as 'Ar lan y Môr' (At the Seaside), 'Dyma Fi' (Myself) and 'Y Teulu' (The Family). These are effectively translated into a broad and balanced programme of experiences in each of the six areas that well reflect the requirements of the Desirable Outcomes for children's learning. All children receive equal opportunities to take advantage of the planned programme of work and good consideration is given to continuity and progression in their learning.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.3 The quality of teaching

Good features

Staff have a firm knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for children's learning and provide a range of appropriate experiences which are organised effectively. Resources are used well to support learning and overall, activities are generally well timed to ensure that children remain on task. Staff succeed in creating a particularly happy and homely environment that makes the children feel secure and provide good opportunities for them to develop the necessary skills for independent learning.

Shortcomings

At times, there is a need for more emphasis on interaction with children in the activities to further develop their oral skills.

4.4 The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers

Good features

The staff know the children well. Samples are kept of any significant work completed and are put into individual scrap books which are later made available to parents. Progress in the six areas of learning is recorded in a Record of Achievement booklet by colouring relevant boxes which show what the child has achieved. Parents receive good opportunities to discuss the children's progress on an informal basis prior to and at the end of the daily sessions. Upon leaving the Cylch, information on achievement is effectively transferred to the schools.

Shortcomings

Current assessment arrangements do not put sufficient emphasis on identifying the next stage in the child's learning.

Although it is intended to do so, written reports are not currently provided to parents on their children's progress.

4.5 The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community

Good features

Staff are very welcoming of parents and carers to the nursery and this ensures that the children feel comfortable and ready to learn. There is a particularly informative notice board in the reception area, giving a good level of detail on the study programmes, together with information leaflets provided by the Partnership and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. All the relevant information is provided to new parents at the pre-registration stage. The publication of a newsletter and the formal gathering of parents' views through a questionnaire are relatively new initiatives and are to be commended.

The nursery has established a good relationship with its community and the links with the schools to which the children transfer are also good.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.6 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting

Good features

The nursery is managed effectively and staff work well together as a team. There is a also good working relationship with the Management Committee. Agreed aims and values promote equality and this is well reflected in the day-to-day work.

Staff are receptive to new developments and training courses are supported to improve skills and to update knowledge in the area of pre-statutory age education. There is very good co-operation with and valuable support received from the Partnership's advisory service and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin development officers. Staff meet regularly to informally evaluate the work of the Cylch. Overall, the level of resources is good and effective use is made of them.

Shortcomings

Currently, self-evaluation procedures have not been sufficiently well developed and formalised.

4.7 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report.

The setting has not been previously inspected by Estyn.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

continue with the efforts to develop the children's Welsh oral skills;

implement the intention to provide parents with a written report on their children's progress;

develop the children's information technology skills by providing more regular access to computer equipment;

seek to extend the children's outdoor play experiences;

develop more formal self-evaluation procedures.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to Estyn. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.