



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Llandrindod  
Ysgol Trefonnen  
Llandrindod  
Powys  
LD1 5EP**

**Date of inspection: February 2012**

**by**

**Mr Eifion Morgan**

**Reporting Inspector**

**for**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## About the setting

Cylch Meithrin Llandrindod is located in Ysgol Trefonnen – a new school opened in 2011. The Cylch occupies a purpose built classroom with an adjacent secure, outside tarmaced area. Whilst the Cylch is long established in Llandrindod, it only moved to the present location in 2011. The current leader took up her post in January 2012. The Cylch operates independently of the school and is controlled by its own voluntary management committee, however, it benefits substantially from its close proximity to the school and is next door to the school's reception class.

The Cylch provides Welsh medium education for children many of whom progress to receiving their education in Ysgol Trefonnen's Welsh stream. Although the area appears at first sight to be relatively prosperous, there are areas of deprivation. Children attending the Cylch come from varied backgrounds – some of whom come from relatively deprived homes. At present there are 20 children on the register, of whom 10 are aged 3 years and funded. All speak English as their first language and one attends a local school for children with additional learning needs (ALN) on a part time basis.

The Cylch meets on 5 mornings of the week between 9.15 a.m. and 11.45 a.m. during school terms. The Cylch has its own entrance via the children's play area. The classroom is approached via a small hallway which provides for cloakroom and toilet facilities. Notices for parents are displayed in this area. The main classroom is a pleasant, warm, and a well lit environment. The Cylch has use of the room each morning and the English medium Nursery in the afternoons.

The main room is suitably differentiated in activity areas based on the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There are wall displays of children's work. There is a small kitchen which is used to prepare snacks. The main room has immediate access to the outside which allows children to use the outside at their leisure when the weather permits.

There are three members of staff who are experienced and well qualified. All are Welsh speakers. The management committee is very supportive and well aware of the activities undertaken by the Cylch. The chairperson undertakes annual appraisal of the staff. There are good and developing links with the primary school. Links with both the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and the Powys Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership are well established. The staff appreciate the support these organisations provide.

The Cylch was previously inspected by Estyn in 2006. Since then there have been changes of staff and location but the key issues in the report have been addressed. The Cylch was previously inspected by Care Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in December 2011 when it moved to the present location. It is registered to accommodate up to 15 children. The Cylch enjoys the status awarded by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin of "Cylch Ragorol".

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

#### Good features

- \* All children achieve good standards and make realistic progress.
- \* All children enjoy learning and demonstrate good behaviour and attitudes.
- \* All children are well cared for and supported and the Cylch promotes children's health and wellbeing.
- \* The Cylch displays an inclusive ethos where all children are valued and respected.
- \* Staff at the Cylch work together very well and their work is well focused on providing the best educational provision for the children.
- \* Planning takes into account children's interests and is well focused on developing the Foundation Phase outcomes.

#### Adequate features

- \* The provision for developing children's competence in the Welsh language.
- \* The use of assessment results in planning future activities so as to fully meet individual children's needs.
- \* The learning environment lacks sufficient stimulating and challenging activities for the children.

### Prospects for improvement

#### Good features

- \* Staff's openness to new ideas and how such ideas have been incorporated for the benefit of the children.
- \* The detailed self-evaluation document highlighting the strengths of the Cylch.
- \* The substantial input of the recently appointed leader and its impact on the educational provision.
- \* The warm and effective working relationship between the staff of the Cylch.
- \* The good links that exist between the Cylch and the Primary school.

#### Adequate features

- \* Areas for improvement have been identified but development planning is underdeveloped.

## Recommendations

The Cylch needs to:

- R1 put greater emphasis on developing the Welsh language.
- R2 make greater use of assessment results when planning, so that activities are well matched to children's needs.
- R3 review the learning environment so as to provide stimulating experiences for the children and where possible challenging activities.
- R4 prioritise and carefully plan for future improvement.

### **What happens next?**

The Cylch will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the Cylch's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

All children make realistic progress and achieve good standards. A good and notable feature is children's perseverance, they concentrate on the tasks in hand for extended periods of time. Virtually all children have the confidence to make choices and to work independently.

All children make themselves understood. They express their feelings and listen to adults and carry out instructions willingly. Several children seek out opportunities to help adults, such as clearing away at the end of the morning session.

Many children enjoy experimenting with mark-making and are developing good control of pencils, chalk and felt-tip pens.

All children have a good command of the English language but are less confident in Welsh. They understand basic instructions when spoken to and know basic Welsh words and phrases. They understand more words than they can speak. All children are happy repeating some familiar words and phrases and join in Welsh songs. Most children enjoy listening to stories and respond to basic questions. Overall, children are reluctant to use the Welsh language in conversation and their vocabulary is limited. However, all children come from English speaking homes and are making realistic progress based on their starting point.

All children use mathematical language and are learning to count. Many children follow a pattern, such as a colour pattern and understand how to sequence objects.

Many children are confident users of the computer and have sufficient control of the "mouse" to move the cursor with sufficient accuracy to create patterns and move screen images.

#### Wellbeing: Good

All children show that they enjoy learning and are active participants in tasks set out for them. Their self-confidence enables them to make choices, work independently and seek help when necessary. All children have good attitudes and are well behaved. They are considerate and courteous to each other and relate well to adults.

Most children are beginning to acquire an understanding in line with their age of how they can keep healthy. They are conscious of the need to wash their hands before food and enjoy physical activity. All children indicate that they feel safe and are free from verbal abuse in the setting.

All children co-operate well and are involved in making basic decisions about their life in the setting, such as where they play and selecting activities that interest them.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Planning is detailed and is well focused on meeting the outcomes of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners collaborate in planning and activities fully engage the children. Activities encourage children to work together with sufficient opportunities for children to make choices and to work independently should they wish to do so. Planning incorporates opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills and to develop an understanding of the world around them.

All children are acquiring skills that will enable them to progress in all areas of learning but do not sufficiently focus on building systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Planned activities are not always sufficiently focused on the next steps in individual children's learning so as to cater for children's individual needs and ability. This applies equally to developing children's Welsh vocabulary and in establishing language patterns.

The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are well incorporated in children's learning experiences. Opportunities are also provided for children to learn about recycling of materials such as waste foods.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners are experienced and have a good understanding of child development and the philosophy of the Foundation Phase. Adults value children highly and have high expectations of them, both in terms of personal and academic development. These expectations are largely realised in practice.

Planning provides a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities and this works well in practice. Practitioners know very well when to intervene and when to allow children to work independently or in small groups.

Children's behaviour is very well managed and praise used to good effect. Adults are good language models and this provides a good basis on which to develop children's linguistic skills in the Welsh language. Questioning is well used to develop children's thinking skills.

Children are assessed regularly – adults record their observations and these are transferred to an individual child's assessment record book on a weekly basis. Whilst this provides a record of achievement, comments sometimes are too descriptive and do not sufficiently indicate what the child is able to do, for example in terms of acquired skills. Staff know the children well and know their capabilities well but the outcomes of assessment are insufficiently used to plan future activities so that activities meet children's needs and focus on the next steps in children's learning.

Parents have regular contact with the staff and this provides them with opportunities to discuss their child's progress. A notice displayed outside the Cylch informs parents of the week's activities.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The Cylch's provision for children's health and wellbeing, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The Cylch radiates a calm, supportive atmosphere that fosters values, such as honesty, fairness, and respect for the truth. Clear guidelines and adult intervention when necessary help children distinguish between right and wrong. All children are happy to take responsibility and many show initiative, such as helping adults when opportunities allow.

Visits to the immediate locality develop children's curiosity and an understanding of living things. They develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them and where mini beasts can be found. All children understand and implement rules of behaviour that enables the Cylch to display a calm atmosphere where individuals are valued.

Children have ample opportunities to contribute to decision making and to follow their interests.

Specialist services are used appropriately and children requiring specialist help are well supported. Children identified with additional learning needs (ALN) have full access to all areas of learning. Parents spoke well of the support available.

The setting has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children. A member of staff has responsibility for dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues. Staff have undergone recent training and are familiar with child protection procedures. Policies and procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008).

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is fully inclusive and all children have equal access to the curriculum. All children and staff are valued as individuals ensuring a tolerant attitude and the elimination of any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. Children, whatever their background, disabilities or requirements, are respected and become an integral part of the community.

The setting is appropriately staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners. They work together very well and their contribution is well focused on the needs of the children.

In the main, resources are adequate to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The Cylch has use of a large purpose built room and immediate access to outside facilities. The Cylch also benefits from access to the school's outside environment. Facilities, however, are not particularly imaginative and lack

activities that excite and challenge the children. Further interactive activities would be beneficial in extending children's experiences.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

At the time of the inspection the leader had only been in post for less than 2 months. However, she has successfully worked with her two colleagues to form an effective team with high expectations. All staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and work with a sense of purpose. The team share values and successfully create a positive ethos focused on children's needs. Effective links with parents and carers are in place and this makes an important contribution to children's learning.

The voluntary management committee is very effective in supporting the work of the Cylch. The chairperson is well established in her post and through regularly visiting the Cylch is well aware of its work. The committee has recently been instrumental in appointing the staff and overseeing the development of the Cylch. The management committee understand their roles and have taken account of recent legislation and guidance. They fulfil their legal duties.

The Cylch has taken good account of national and local priorities, including implement the Foundation Phase curriculum and taking account of Healthy Eating Initiatives.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The self-evaluation document has identified the strengths of the Cylch and areas for improvement. However, due to the recent appointment of the leader, areas for improvement have not been prioritised, nor strategies for improvement implemented.

Staff have attended relevant professional development courses which have been useful and beneficial in terms of children's progress and wellbeing. They have impacted well on the quality of provision provided by the Cylch.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The Cylch has very good relationships with parents and carers. Parents normally visit the Cylch prior to their children attending and the Cylch provides parents with a folder of useful information. Parents accompany their children to the Cylch and take time to settle them down. During the inspection children were observed coming very happily to the Cylch. The leader greeted every child and parent and children were soon engaged in activities set out for them.

In discussion, parents spoke about their complete satisfaction with arrangements and how well their children were progressing. They would have no hesitation in recommending the Cylch to prospective parents.

Good transfer arrangements are in place with the majority of children opting to continue their education through the medium of Welsh. The reception teacher visits the Cylch regularly and transfer is straight forward, in that children only move to the adjacent room.

The Local Authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin representative have established a good partnership with the Cylch. This provides the Cylch with good support and advice which has proved influential in improving children's learning environment. This arrangement will also ensure that the Cylch focuses on aspects highlighted for improvement.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staff are well managed. Practitioners collaborate in planning, taking into account children's interests. As a team, staff work together very well taking on different roles as required. All have attended professional training courses which has resulted in improved provision. Staff are also vigilant in noting children's attainment and this provides a measure of the impact of different activities on children's learning.

Overall, there is an adequate amount of resources and are suitably deployed to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. However, resources and activities, at times, do not sufficiently challenge children and encourage further investigation.

The Cylch benefits from a good outdoor environment that allows the children to develop their skills across all areas of learning.

Overall, children receive a good range of experiences and are developing well. The Cylch provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (less than 10).

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

All Children enjoy their time at the Cylch. They show their enjoyment when coming to the sessions and are soon actively involved in the range of activities set out for them. They are greeted by the staff but are soon engaged with their colleagues on the different activities. Children are self-confident and independent but know where to seek advice.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))