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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Penllwyn
Neuadd y Pentref
Penllwyn
Aberystwyth**

Date of inspection: 23 and 24 March, 2011

by

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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:

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Penllwyn was established in the mid-eighties and is located in the village hall. Most of the children who attend the Cylch live in the local community and the surrounding areas and the families come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The Cylch operates as a member of the Ceredigion Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is also a registered member of 'Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin'.

The Cylch is registered to cater for 20 children between two and a half and four years of age. They attend the Cylch for four mornings a week, and during the inspection there were eight three year olds in attendance.

About half the children come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. There are currently no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or children with additional learning needs.

There are three members of staff. The lead practitioner and the other members of staff were appointed in September 2010. The lead practitioner is following appropriate training in the care and education of young children and one of the practitioners has suitable qualifications in this area. The setting is managed by a voluntary committee. The Cylch received its most recent full inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2010. This is the first time the setting has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The provider's current performance is adequate because:

- the children are happy in the Cylch and enjoy the learning experiences provided;
- the children make appropriate progress during their time in the Cylch;
- the lead practitioner leads by example and promotes good teamwork;
- there are very good relationships between the practitioners and the children;
- there is a suitable structure for the activities but there is insufficient planning to develop children's skills consistently across the areas of learning;
- arrangements to assess children's progress are being developed;
- the daily arrangements at the Cylch operate smoothly but staff management procedures are underdeveloped;
- procedures to evaluate the provision and plan improvements are at an early stage of development.

Prospects for improvement

The Cylch has adequate prospects of improvement because:

- although the lead practitioner and the team are fully committed to their role, they have had insufficient time to establish the range of procedures required for organising and managing the Cylch;
- curriculum planning processes are at an early stage of development;
- assessment and recording procedures are not fully implemented;
- although the new improvement plan identifies appropriate areas for development many of the evaluation processes are of a more informal nature.

Recommendations

In order to develop the Cylch needs to:

- A1 extend the children's skills across the areas of learning;
- A2 develop curriculum planning processes to promote children's learning consistently across the areas of learning;
- A3 implement the arrangements to assess and record children's progress and development;
- A4 establish procedures to evaluate and manage the provision fully.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Most children's achievements on entry are very broad and they make appropriate progress in their learning during their time in the setting.

The children's personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural awareness are good. They follow class routines particularly well and share resources and activities readily. They take their turn and follow simple rules. The majority undertake tasks, such as dressing in outdoor clothing and washing their hands, independently. They develop their understanding of aspects of Welsh culture, such as celebrating St. David's Day, appropriately.

The children's Welsh language, literacy and communication skills development is adequate. About half of the children make good progress in developing and using their skills. The remainder make adequate progress. Nearly all the children listen well and the majority understand and respond appropriately to simple questions and instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and handle books with care and considerable interest. Nearly all the children are beginning to recognise their names. They use a range of media, including paint and pencils, increasingly to practise their marking skills.

The children's mathematical skills are adequate. A few of the older children can distribute objects into different sets correctly and they count quite confidently. Most

of the children know number rhymes and take part in number games with support. Although a few of the children understand terms, such as big and small, the majority have an insecure grasp of basic mathematical terms. The children's ability to recognise two dimensional shapes is insufficiently developed.

The children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is adequate. They have a developing knowledge of the seasons, and of familiar plants and animals. They know the names of well-known fruits and vegetables and have a general awareness of their senses. The majority have a secure understanding of the weather. Their information and communications skills (ICT) are less well developed.

The children's physical skills are good. They use a range of tools, such as paint brushes, scissors and building apparatus, well. The children's creative skills are adequate. They use different media appropriately to produce colourful pictures, simple collages and to experiment with chalk. They know a range songs and rhymes which they sing enthusiastically. The children do not extend their communication, imaginative and creative skills further through more focused role play activities.

There is no consistent difference in the development and achievements of boys and girls.

Wellbeing: Good

Children's wellbeing is good. The majority have a developing awareness of the benefits of exercise and of healthy eating. They enjoy taking part in physical activity including movement activities in the hall. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning and most are eager to participate in new experiences. Most persevere well with their tasks. They play collaboratively together and behave well. They acquire secure social skills for life outside the setting.

The majority of the children's attendance levels and punctuality are good. There are good examples of the setting's partnerships with the community from which the children benefit.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Adequate

The setting provides a broad range of interesting activities across most areas of learning. The activities are based on a series of themes that are suitable for the age range. More formal planning using curricular frameworks are at an early stage of development. Overall, neither the planning nor the organisation ensures consistent continuity and progression in the learning, including the development of skills, in all areas of learning.

The practitioners make full use of the indoor and outdoor environments to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. They promote children's awareness of their environment appropriately by studying the main features of the seasons, visiting farms and woods, and observing animals and plants. The Cylch gives consistent attention to promoting the children's Welsh skills and there is effective use of schemes such as 'Joio dan 5'. The practitioners develop children's awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales through suitable activities such as celebrating St. David's Day and Santes Dwynwen's Day.

Teaching: Adequate

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and they provide learning experiences that regularly engage the children's interests. The teaching is good overall. There is appropriate use of a range of teaching methods and suitable resources to support the learning.

The practitioners work well as a team and they offer children good support. They participate effectively in the activities and manage the children's behavior well.

The practitioners know the children well. Recently, new procedures are being introduced to assess and record children's progress and wellbeing. This important development is in its infancy. Through discussion, parents/carers receive regular information about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. They contribute well to children's general development and wellbeing and to supporting their learning. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle in well in the setting and that they are happy to ask for support and assistance. There are clear arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs as and when required, and there are good lines of communication with key agencies. The setting fulfils safeguarding regulations and responsibilities.

The learning experiences provided promote children's personal development well and includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children receive suitable opportunities to perform in concerts for parents and members of the community.

Learning environment: Adequate

The setting is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. There is a good emphasis on respecting and celebrating diversity. There is a sufficient supply of resources that are used appropriately to support the learning and teaching. Visitors from the community, such as a farmer and policeman, contribute occasionally to enhancing pupils' experiences.

The Cylch is accommodated in a room in the hall building. Although the room is very small, the space available is used fully. The main hall is used effectively for physical education activities. There is direct access to a small piece of land that provides a play area of good quality for the children and which contains a range of resources and equipment. The practitioners are in the process of developing appropriate activities to use them fully. The setting succeeds in creating a welcoming environment for the children.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The practitioners are aware of their different responsibilities and they work well as a team. The lead practitioner has established sound daily routines which operate smoothly. A great deal has been achieved in a short period of time. Appropriate policies are implemented, such as child protection and securing equal opportunities. Longer term planning is in its early stages.

The management committee is highly supportive of the setting and has established a good relationship with the practitioners and parents/carers. Members take a keen interest in what is happening at the setting and they work hard to raise funds and to secure improvements, such as equipment for the outdoor play area. The committee meets regularly and minutes are kept. The practitioners attend suitable courses on aspects of child development and care. However, there are no specific arrangements to evaluate the performance of the practitioners and identify areas for further professional development.

Improving quality: Adequate

The practitioners are open to new ideas and are happy to try different ways of working. They hold regular discussions but there are no structures to evaluate the quality of provision, such as the learning, in order to identify areas for improvement. Aspects of the provision are discussed further with the local authority's link teacher and a Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin officer. The process begun prior to the inspection of discussing some aspects of the provision more formally under the guidance of the link teacher is a good starting point. The improvement plan includes targets and relevant areas for further development.

Partnership working: Good

There is a good partnership between the practitioners. They share information about children and they know who to contact if they need additional support. There is a good relationship also between the setting and the parents/carers. This was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection and in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Practitioners are regularly available to meet parents/carers at the beginning and end of each session. Relevant information is provided to new parents.

A constructive working relationship has been established with the local primary school. The practitioners and children visit the school and trips are organised together to places of interest. The good relationship that exists with the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin officers is leading to improvements in the setting's work. Appropriate use is made of community links to support the children's learning.

Resource management: Adequate

Overall, resources are managed and used appropriately to support the learning. The investment in the outdoor play area offers good opportunities for children to undertake a range of activities.

The setting is staffed appropriately and training opportunities are provided. However, staff appraisal systems have yet to be established. The lead practitioner and the committee have an appropriate understanding of their budget, and they prioritise their spending according to need. Financial decisions are discussed by the committee and managed effectively by the treasurer. The Cylch offers adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Nearly all the parents completed the questionnaire and they make very positive comments. They are satisfied with the Cylch and that their children enjoy and feel safe there. They feel that their children make progress, and their response to the teaching was positive. They say that the staff are very approachable and that their children have settled in well. They are of the view that they receive good quality information about their children's progress and that staff treat their children fairly and with respect.

Appendix 2

Reporting Inspector –

Miss Dorothy Morris

Reporting Inspector

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)