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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni
Heol Dewi Sant
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 6HF**

Date of inspection: June 2012

by

**Nicholas Jones
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 setting'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

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About the setting

Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni is a Welsh medium cylch based on the grounds of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. All the children attending the cylch come from the town and the surrounding area. The area is recognised as being socially and economically disadvantaged.

The cylch has been located in the building since 2008. It has sole use of two large rooms and an extensive outdoor area.

The cylch reports that very few children come from homes where Welsh is spoken. The children represent the full range of ability and the cylch accepts children with additional learning needs.

Three children in the current group are recognised as having additional learning needs. The cylch receives assistance from outside agencies to support children that have additional needs. No children attending at present are from a minority ethnic background and a few children come from socially disadvantaged homes.

The cylch is registered for a maximum of 26 children and it accepts children from two years old. There are currently up to 61 children attending the cylch at different times during the week. Forty-five of these are funded three year olds. The Mudiad Meithrin, Flying Start and the local authority support the cylch.

The joint leaders have been in post as leaders since 2006 and 2011. One of the leaders was not at work during the inspection. Five members of staff assist them on a part time basis. They are all suitably qualified.

An informative booklet and a website provide parents and carers with details of the cylch. Parents and carers bring their children into the cylch and this provides for a meeting with the staff if needed. The cylch is open for five days a week between 9.15am and 11.45am and 12.30pm and 3pm.

The cylch is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. The management committee oversees the work of the cylch.

The cylch was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2011 and was awarded the Cylch Rhagorol certificate in May 2012. Estyn inspected the cylch in 2006.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Good
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the cylch is good because:

- nearly all children achieve well;
- learning experiences are planned well;
- all children are supported well and benefit from interesting activities;
- the teaching is adequate and concentrates appropriately on Foundation Phase outcomes;
- good resources are available;
- there is a good relationship between adults and children; and
- the staff work effectively together and everyone contributes purposefully to the success of the cylch.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leaders are beginning to provide a clear direction for the work of the cylch through the development plans;
- the self-evaluation systems impact appropriately on the development plan;
- all the staff have a positive and active attitude towards professional development and training;
- the finance is used well;
- there are positive and effective relationships with outside agencies; and
- the learning environment is used effectively.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the cylch needs to:

- R1 ensure that introductions are effective and that all children are challenged appropriately during focus tasks;
- R2 set clear learning objectives and success criteria for the children at the start of every activity;
- R3 ensure that daily assessments lead directly to children's individual targets; and
- R4 use development plans effectively to target improvements within appropriate timescales.

What happens next?

The cylch will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the cylch's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Nearly all children achieve good standards and progress well in all areas of learning considering their starting points, which is often similar or above the expected baseline. There is no significant difference in the standards of different groups of children in the cylch.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their literacy skills in the Welsh language. Nearly all children have well-developed listening skills. Nearly all children are eager to contribute to stories that are read to them.

Nearly all children answer questions enthusiastically and this illustrates clearly their developing understanding of the Welsh language. Nearly all children respond sensibly to group discussions and discuss the weather well. Another developing feature of their competence is that they respond in Welsh with little prompting to colours and numbers.

Most children choose to look at books independently. They hold books appropriately and study pictures and print with interest. They recognise the main characters in a story and discuss the content of a story enthusiastically with each other and adults.

Most children are beginning to develop their writing skills and a notable feature of their early writing is that they understand the purpose of writing through practical tasks. They see the purpose of mark making and of their early writing. Around half of the children are beginning to form recognisable letters of the alphabet and numbers independently.

Nearly all children are developing their numeracy skills well through the practical use of number and use simple mathematical language appropriately. Nearly all children can group objects by colour or shape.

Nearly all children use electronic equipment well. They use digital cameras for recording and use the computer with confidence through controlling the necessary equipment. Most children enjoy participating in music making and use scissors well when cutting. They have an appropriate awareness of a store of Welsh songs, which they sing enthusiastically.

Nearly all children are fully engaged in every activity and concentrate and persevere for long periods of time. They make decisions and work well independently inside and outside the building. Nearly all the children participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities available to them that successfully develops their creative skills and the knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children, relative to their age, have an appropriate understanding of how they can keep healthy. They know, for example, when they need to wash their hands and do so with little prompting. Nearly all children have the good knowledge that a healthy diet incorporates fruit and vegetables.

Nearly all children's attitude to learning is good. They show interest in their work and in the activities planned for them. Nearly all children sustain good concentration for long periods of time and make decisions independently during activities. Nearly all children's behaviour is good.

Nearly all children relate well to each other, to adults and visitors. They are courteous, considerate and willing to share resources. All children take a full part in the life and activities of the cylch, through offering suggestions and challenges to adults. They have worthwhile opportunities to suggest their own ideas and these are, when possible, incorporated into children's tasks and activities.

The good community links draw children's attention to those people, such as firemen and others who look after them. Most children display a sense of belonging to their community. They are happy, well cared for and free from any form of harassment.

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

Even though the planning structure is new, the curriculum is planned well to meet the philosophy of the Foundation Phase curriculum and to achieve the identified outcomes of children's learning. The curriculum builds effectively on children's previous knowledge and experiences and incorporates appropriate opportunities for the development of skills across the curriculum.

Time is set aside weekly, when all staff meet to plan the curriculum. This provides the children with useful and interesting activities. The curriculum is flexible, appropriate and matched to the children's interests.

There are worthwhile opportunities incorporated into the day-to-day working of the cylch for children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners. Whilst specific activities are planned, children have the freedom to select their own tasks and activities. During snack times the children are encouraged to serve themselves, which provides good opportunities for them to develop their personal and social skills.

Effective opportunities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creativity. The provision for developing the children's information technology skills is good and the staff consistently direct the children towards the use of technological resources that include a computer and cameras. Children have many opportunities to develop their thinking skills through appropriate activities,

which focus on every area of learning in their turn.

The provision made for children to learn the Welsh language is good. Welsh is not always the natural language of communication between adults and children. However, through coherent opportunities, all children are encouraged to speak the language most of the time.

The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are given due emphasis, like the celebration of St. David's Day. Good opportunities are also provided for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions, such as during their study of the Chinese New Year, Diwali and religious festivals. Such activities help children to develop a good understanding of the wider world and raise their awareness of age appropriate global citizenship effectively.

The purposeful provision includes opportunities for all children to develop respect for each other; opportunities to form good relationships with each other and with adults; and opportunities to become tolerant of each other.

All children have good opportunities to plant seeds, look after plants and recycle paper and food. This begins their understanding of plant growth and sustainability effectively.

Teaching: Adequate

The staff have a good, practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a positive relationship between all the staff and the children. The staff are sensitive to the needs of the children, which encourages every child's involvement and enjoyment.

The staff's active role in planning the curriculum ensures the best use of their expertise. However, when a focus activity is introduced, there is not enough reference made to the learning objective and the success criteria of the activity. The children are therefore not challenged sufficiently according to their abilities.

There is a good balance between adult directed and child selected activities, both indoors and out of doors. All children are free to select from either independent or adult led activities. However, the pace of introductions and adult led activities are too slow. Therefore, the children are seated for long periods of time.

Staff model language appropriately to the children's development levels and use questioning well to develop children's thinking and communication skills. The standard of the staff's Welsh varies in quality and many of the staff are attending courses to raise their own standards in Welsh.

Assessment procedures and the recording of children's achievements are completed efficiently. However, the daily assessments do not lead directly to individual children's targets. Therefore, the staff are not totally aware of an individual child's targets and what the individual child needs to do to improve.

There are records of children's achievements available to parents at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing is good. Nearly all children enjoy their time at the cylch. Nearly all children arrive showing a sense of anticipation and are keen to get involved. They partake enthusiastically in activities set out for them. The broad curriculum, which consists of visits and visitors, develops and extends children's experiences well.

Follow-up work in the classroom shows the wide range of experiences that arise from their activities and the children's sense of wonder. Visits to the community and visitors to the cylch develop children's knowledge and understanding of their own community effectively.

The cylch's provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Values, such as honesty, fairness, respect and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered through the day-to-day activities and accepted without question. Nearly all children know and accept the social norms of living together, sharing and accepting the views of others and being members of a community. The cylch is an organised unit, where children value each other and in turn, the staff value them.

Children's cultural development is good, which incorporates Welsh customs and traditions and it extends to other cultures when the children celebrate events like the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

The cylch's staff are vigilant in identifying children requiring specialist help. They make use of professional help and guidance effectively when necessary. Staff receive regular and appropriate training.

The cylch has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The cylch is secure, where the entrance door is locked. Only a member of staff opens the door, consequently no one can enter or a child leave unaccompanied. Good care is taken when children are being collected to ensure they are in the care of their parents or of a known carer.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that any child suspected of requiring additional help is noted and their progress is monitored closely. The additional learning needs co-ordinator is familiar with the necessary procedures for supporting such a child.

Where necessary, external agencies are involved and support is provided if needed. At present, three children have additional learning needs.

Learning environment: Good

The cylch, through its day-to-day activities and the approach adopted by the staff promotes a positive ethos. The staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. All children have equal access to a purposeful curriculum supported by an extensive outside area. The homely atmosphere and the friendship provided by the staff ensures that a tolerant attitude pervades the cylch. The cylch employs

positive behaviour strategies that successfully eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. All children enjoy equality of opportunity.

The cylch's staff are well qualified and experienced and there is a favourable adult to child ratio. Staff expertise is used well both in planning and in supervising activities. The cylch uses its resources well to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the needs of the children. The resources are accessible to all children and this promotes the children's sense of independence and responsibility.

The local environment is used effectively through visits to the community and through visitors to the cylch. This contributes well to children's understanding of the world around them.

The leaders and management committee were informed of a minor issue concerning health and safety that needs attention.

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

Staff have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities recently and work together well as a team, sharing values, aims and objectives. The leaders involve all staff in planning and this ensures the best use of their expertise. The leaders are actively involved, giving clear directions and accepting advice from outside agencies in order to improve.

The cylch has made important improvements through the local authority's support over the last year. There is a positive ethos and a commitment to provide the best possible experiences for all children.

The leadership and all staff are focused well on the children's needs and the cylch successfully achieves this aim in practice. The staff receive relevant and appropriate training and this impacts well on the quality of provision.

Effective links with the parents and carers are in place. They are kept well informed of their children's achievements and progress and this helps them to support their children's learning.

The self-evaluation systems and the process of strategic planning are by now established. However, strategic planning is not structured effectively in terms of appropriate time scales. Therefore, targets for improvement often take too much time to complete. By now, the systems are challenged sufficiently by the new management committee. Therefore, the impact on the long-term strategy of the cylch is beginning to be monitored in greater detail.

The cylch has taken good account of national priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Improving quality: Good

The cylch self-evaluates appropriately and identifies areas for improvement effectively. This has included developing assessment, improving Welsh and developing formal observations.

The development plans arise directly from the findings of the self-evaluation process and are given priority in the development of the cylch. The leaders discuss the process with confidence, understanding and clarity. However, targets for improvement often take too long to complete through the development plans.

Staff have identified training needs effectively through the process. They attend training opportunities and these professional learning experiences impact positively on children's learning and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

Nearly all parents, in the questionnaire replies and during discussions, expressed their satisfaction with the cylch. They are appreciative of the standards of care and the quality of education available. They appreciate the open door policy and the opportunities they have to meet staff on a daily basis.

By the time the children leave the cylch, parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The links with the Mudiad Meithrin, the local authority and Flying Start have positive aspects that are used to benefit the work of the cylch. The advice and suggestions have helped in moving the cylch forward and has contributed to the good standards of provision. The link with the local Welsh school is very good and they visit each other regularly to share worthwhile experiences.

The cylch has been successful in obtaining grant funding and this is used responsibly for the benefit of the children.

Resource management: Good

The cylch's staff work together effectively. Planning is completed collaboratively and this results in the most being made of individual expertise for the benefit of every child. The cylch is resourced well and the resources available are used effectively to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The resources are also accessible to the children and this encourages independence and has a positive impact on their learning.

The cylch uses the building and the outdoor area effectively and provides good experiences, which are planned well. The leaders lead well and use support agencies purposefully. This is beginning to impact well on development plans.

The cylch provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seventeen parents and carers responded to the questionnaires. All the parents and carers are satisfied overall. They agree that their children like the cylch and have settled in well. All feel that their children are treated fairly and with respect and that they have opportunities to keep healthy and take regular exercise. They all feel that their children are safe and well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Nearly all parents and carers consider that the cylch is well run and that there are sufficient trips and visits. Nearly all feel that children behave well and make good progress.

Most parents and carers feel that the teaching is good; that they are comfortable contacting the cylch with problems and that the cylch deals well with complaints.

Many parents and carers feel that they are well informed about their children's progress.

These responses are similar to national benchmark comparisons.

Responses to discussions with children

Nearly all children are enthusiastic when they arrive and meet with their peers.

Nearly all of them are self-confident from knowing that they are supported well and that they are provided with interesting tasks.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Nicholas Jones	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)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development, as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings, which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation, which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.