

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on: Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Mr Eifion R Morgan

Date of inspection: 29/30 June 2010

Contract number: T/119/09N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys

Address: Y G Ynyswen, Clinic Road, Ynyswen, Treorchy, RCT

Post code: CF42 6ED

Telephone: 07855043356

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Helen Biggs and Nicola Jones

Position: Joint Leaders

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 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 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

Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys is a Welsh medium Nursery that is based in a purpose built porta-cabin in the grounds of Ysgol Ynyswen primary School. Children attending the Cylch come from the village of Ynyswen – a typical valley village in the upper Rhondda valley between Treorchy and Treherbert.

The Cylch has been in this location for the last 5 years and has sole use of the facilities and also use some of the school's outside play areas. The Cylch is approached via some steps or ramp opening into a hallway. This provides for cloakroom facilities and a large notice board giving parents useful information about the Cylch, including the week's activities. Toilet and hand washing facilities are also reasonably located here for the children.

The hallway opens into a large room brightly decorated with wall displays and provides the children with an attractive learning environment. It is suitably differentiated into activity areas well organised and resourced to develop the learning outcomes identified in the Foundation Phase for children of this age. Opening from this room is a small but well equipped kitchen where snacks are prepared. There is also a small office ensuring confidentiality when necessary.

Outside is a secure and well equipped area comprising smooth tarred area and a lockable sheltered accommodation. This area is immediately accessible to the children down a purpose built wooden ramp and enables sand and water, painting and marking activities to take place. It also provides for shelter from both rain and sun and an area where plants can be grown. The Cylch also has access to the school's outside facilities including large play equipment and an exploration area.

The Cylch reports that the majority of the children come from English speaking backgrounds and attend the Cylch so as to benefit from Welsh language education before attending the Welsh medium primary school. Children represent the full range of ability and the Cylch accepts children with additional learning needs. Whilst none of the present cohort has been identified with such needs, the Cylch has, in the past, received support from outside agencies, such as social workers and speech therapists. No child attending at present is from a minority ethnic background and none are from socially disadvantaged homes.

The Cylch accepts children aged 2 years 4 months and move onto the next stage of their education in the September following their third birthday. In most instances they attend the adjacent Welsh medium school. Currently there are 24 children on the register of whom 17 are 3 years olds, 12 of these are funded.

The Cylch is led and managed by two well qualified and experienced leaders assisted by another permanent member of staff. Three other trainee assistants work for 2 and 4 mornings a week. The Cylch has benefited substantially from grant aid including lottery funding and support from the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the local education authority and from the locality. The Cylch is also active in organising fund raising activities. All this has resulted in a well resourced facility for the children. All staff are

Welsh speakers and have attended a good range of training courses – many in their own time.

Parents and carers are made aware of the Cylch by word of mouth, advertisements in the local press and clinic. Several children have also attended the “Ti a Fi” group. There is an informative booklet available for parents and carers that provide them with details of the Cylch. Parents and carers bring their children into the Cylch each morning and this provides for a meeting with the staff. Children are eager to get involved in the activities set out for them.

The Cylch operates five mornings a week during term time from 9.15 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is registered with the Care and Social services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate up to 24 children. It provides children with a safe environment where all children are supervised at all times.

The Cylch is supported by the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and has adopted, and where necessary, amended its policies where appropriate. The Cylch has also received valuable help and support from the Early Years Partnership and Family Support staff of the Local Authority. The Cylch also benefits from the close association with the local primary school.

The Cylch management committee oversees the work of the Cylch. Self-evaluation has been undertaken regularly and relevant targets have been set and achieved in the past. Current targets for improvement are appropriate.

The Cylch was last inspected by the CSSIW in January 2009. It has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

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 Foundation Phase Outcomes for children’s learning.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning

Six areas of learning	Grade for under-fives
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity	1
Language, literacy and communication skills	2
Mathematical development	2
Welsh language development	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2

Physical development	2
Creative development	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	1
Quality of planning for children’s learning	2
Quality of teaching	2
Quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress, and reports for parents and carers	3
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community	2
The contribution made by the setting to children’s well-being	1
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	2
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	N/A

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds.

3.1 Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity

<p>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</p> <p>Outstanding features</p> <p>All children show a high degree of confidence and this is reflected in their ability to engage in activities individually for sustained periods of time. Many children’s growing self-confidence enables them to tackle new experiences and to work in small groups, showing respect for each other. Many children, without prompting, are taking responsibility for personal hygiene.</p> <p>Good features</p> <p>All children form good and very good relationships with other children and adults. They are beginning to show sensitivity for the needs of others, in that they take turns, share and respond to reason. All children are confident to seek help when needed</p>
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and enjoy new experiences.

Most children know that living things, like family pets, need to be treated with care and all children have planted seeds and cared for growing plants.

All children are aware of some of the traditions of Wales and have celebrated, for example St David's day by dressing up, sampling typical Welsh foods and painting Welsh icons.

All children have some experiences of different cultures and celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Most children have good listening skills and carry out instructions willingly. All children's understanding of the Welsh language exceeds their ability to talk in the language. During the inspection, children's reaction to adults' questions such as "Ydy chi'n hapus?" indicated virtually all children's understanding whilst only a minority could confidently answer.

All children enjoy and take part enthusiastically to Welsh songs and nursery rhymes, which many recall from memory. Their pronunciation is good and at best children understand the meaning of the words and phrases they sing.

All children show an interest in books and many enjoy listening to stories. Many children enjoy listening to stories in their listening corner and follow the taped stories in their story books. These children hold books carefully and turn the pages appropriately. They know that words have meaning.

All children enjoy the rudiments of writing and use a range of media, including chalk, crayons and pencils. They understand the purpose of writing and a few children are beginning to form recognisable letters of the alphabet.

Overall, all children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the Welsh language at a good rate and acquire the rudiments of the language, enabling them to pursue their learning through the medium of the Welsh language.

Shortcomings

Most children's Welsh vocabulary is limited and they are reluctant to use the language.

3.3 Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

All children respond by joining in singing familiar number rhymes and songs, such as “Pump teddy bear yn eistedd ar y Wâl” Many children anticipate the next number in the sequence showing that they count backwards to zero.

Most children join in rote counting to 9 and a few of the older children recognise number in written form to 4. These children are beginning to understand one to one correspondence when dealing with real objects.

Older and more able children recognise and draw basic two-dimensional shapes, including circle, triangle, square, rectangle and star shapes. Their drawings are well formed.

Most children sort, match and sequence different shapes and recreate basic patterns. They count familiar objects and several have an awareness of the purpose of money.

Many children have a developing mathematical vocabulary and use such words as full and empty; heavy and light; and top and bottom. These children have also begun measuring as when weighing different ingredients when cooking.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.4 Welsh language development

Not applicable

3.5 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

All children explore a wide range of materials including living and non-living things. Many children know that some metals are attracted to magnets, whilst plastic and

fabrics are not. They also know that some materials, like wood, float and others like stones sink in water.

All children examine materials in the outside environment and use magnifying glasses to look at small animals and plants in detail.

Most children know the names of the external parts of the human body and their main uses. They also know the main parts of plants and have planted seeds. Children know that plants need water in order to grow.

Most children know about the seasons of the year and that winter is colder, requiring them to wear warmer clothes. They know that wet clothes dry when in air and that they dry quicker if they are hung up to dry

Shortcomings

Children's knowledge of their local and immediate environment is limited.

3.6 Physical development

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

All children enjoy physical activities. They know the different ways of moving, including, walking, running, skipping, hopping and jumping. In their music and movement activities they use different ways of responding to the music showing increasing control, balance and co-ordination.

All children play on large toys confidently with good awareness of space and attention to safety. They listen to instructions and act accordingly. In small game situations with a ball they show good hand-eye co-ordination.

Most children use small equipment competently, including scissors and glue sticks. These children handle tools carefully with due attention to safety.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.7 Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

All children experiment with a wide range of different materials. In their painting activities they select and mix paints, hold brushes appropriately and talk about their

designs. In their two and three-dimensional work they use a range of papers, fabrics and glitter. Children experiment with soft clay, experience the texture and forming of different shapes.

All children enjoy music and movement activities, they use percussion instruments and are developing the idea of rhythm and respond to suggestions for alternative movements.

Role-play and imaginative drama enable children to use their developing vocabulary.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Children's moral and social development is very good and children are provided with a moral and social framework that enables them to share, take turns, respond to reason and to exercise self-control.

Good features

The Cylch has clear aims about values and principles that are fully realised in its day-to-day life. Children's attitudes are very good and this contributes to the calm ethos prevalent in the Cylch in which the children display confidence and show respect for each other. Children work very well together and enjoy each others' company. Snack times are very good social occasions and children learn through short prayer to give thanks for their food.

The Cylch is very successful in introducing the Welsh language and the cultural and traditions of Wales.

4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

The teaching programme is planned effectively to promote the Foundation Phase outcomes in each of the six areas of children's learning. It provides for equality of access and opportunity for all children, whatever their background. The planning is effective in providing good opportunities to develop Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and children's competence in the Welsh language. The day-to-day activities are also well planned to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the children's well-being.

Children respect each other and treat each other well. There is respect for diversity and good emphasis is given to ensure racial equality.

Overall, there is a good balance between child-led and adult-led activities with the emphasis on providing children with a good choice of activities.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but planning does not always use assessment results sufficiently so as to identify the next steps in children's learning and to plan accordingly.

4.3 The quality of teaching

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

The teaching is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of the Framework for Children's Learning. The teaching is organised effectively to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the six areas of learning. It provides well for children to learn through play and active involvement and the Cylch provides stimulating, challenging and exciting activities for all children.

Activities are well organised for the children beginning as soon as they arrive in the morning and proceeding at a good pace throughout the morning. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult directed activities.

Songs and nursery rhymes are used very well to reinforce children's learning of the Welsh language.

The outside provides children with an excellent range of experiences that can be used for teaching whatever the weather.

Adults use questions and comments well to extend and consolidate children's learning and in particular to develop their Welsh vocabulary.

Overall, the Cylch is well provided with resources both inside and outside and are well used to promote high standards and quality of provision.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but the teaching does not always focus sufficiently on the next steps in children's learning.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

The Cylch staff know their children well and are sensitive to their needs. Helpful records are kept of children's achievements based on a recently introduced weekly focused assessment. Assessment of children is based on the 6 areas of learning.

Parents and carers are informed of their children's progress through informal contact with the staff and by observing children's work.

The achievement and progress of the children is summarised in the end of year report.

The Cylch is sensitive to any child with additional learning needs and have, in the past, involved outside agencies to provide support for these children.

Shortcomings

Assessment results are not used sufficiently to improve the teaching and learning by identifying the next steps in children's learning.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Parents and carers in the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussion expressed their satisfaction with the Cylch. There were no adverse comments and the views of

parents and carers highlighted the approachable nature of the staff and their children's enjoyment of the Cylch.

Parents and carers are kept informed of the education provision through weekly and daily plans displayed on the notice board in the hallway and the Cylch staff are always available to meet parents and carers when they bring their children to the Cylch in the morning.

Regular newsletters keep everyone informed of the Cylch's activities and all administrative details are displayed on the notice board.

Individuals and groups from the community, such as the fire service and police, visit the Cylch to talk with the children and visits are made locally.

Shortcomings

Use made of the local environment is limited in terms of developing children's understanding of their locality.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's well being

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

The arrangements made for snack time makes an excellent contribution to promoting children's personal and social well being. The foods prepared for the children are healthy and nutritious and attractively displayed. Small groups of children eat together and serve themselves, selecting their foods. They sit at a table, wait their turn and talk amongst themselves. These are very good social occasions and enjoyable for the children.

Good features

The Cylch has clear procedures that are well focused on developing and maintaining children's well being. Day-to-day procedures are designed to ensure that children are supported and protected from harm and neglect. These principles are fully realised in practice.

One of the leaders is the Child Protection Co-ordinator and all staff know the procedures to be followed if they have any concerns.

No child is ever unsupervised whatever the activity and no child can leave or adult enter the Cylch unannounced. Staff are vigilant when children are being collected at the end of the morning.

The Cylch is a safe environment for children with gates fastened at a level that children cannot reach. Risk assessment is taken regularly and staff have received relevant training in First Aid and Food Hygiene.

4.7 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

The leaders have clear aims and objectives for improvement based on regular self-evaluation and plan for improvement. Over the years the Cylch has successfully planned to create what is now an attractive and worthwhile outside learning environment and to develop more opportunities for independent learning. The Cylch has also focused on developing children's perception of money and also to develop snack time as a social occasion. Such initiatives have been a success in developing the quality of the educational provision provided by the Cylch.

Staff are well qualified and work together very well as a team complementing their responsibilities. They have undertaken a good range of training, often in their own time.

Resources have been acquired through local fund raising and now provide the children with a good range of activities. The accommodation has been developed and both inside and outside provide for the development of children's learning in the 6 areas of learning, as itemised in the Foundation Phase for children's learning.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but the potential of the local environment in children's learning is not fully realised.

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

Not applicable

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

- * review assessment procedures to identify what children can do and the next steps in children's learning;
- * use the results of assessment in planning and teaching so as to focus on the next steps in learning and to cater for the different abilities and background of children;
- * continue to develop children's competence in the Welsh language ;
- * continue to use and develop links with the community.

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 the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples' Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.