Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys / Ynyswen

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen
Clinic Road
Ynyswen
Treorchy
CF42 6ED

Date of inspection: July 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys / Ynyswen

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Nant Dyrys / Ynyswen
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Helen Biggs
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Helen Biggs
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2 – 5 years old
Number of 3 and 4-year-old children	24
Number of children who receive funding for early education	11
Opening days / times	9:00 – 15:00 Monday – Friday
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Welsh
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards being a bilingual service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	20th June 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	June 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	02/07/2024
Very few children come from Welsh-speaking homes.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three- and four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Care and development	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three- and four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that practitioners question children effectively to encourage them to think for themselves and develop their ideas further

What happens next

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to taking advantage of children's interests at the time to encourage children's curiosity and enjoyment in their learning, to be disseminated on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Children have a very strong voice at the setting and make purposeful choices and decisions. They are confident when experimenting with a wide variety of interesting resources that stimulate their play, spark their imagination and develop their ideas and skills. They work together very effectively and demonstrate excellent independence skills. Nearly all children communicate confidently and know that practitioners listen to them.

Children have a very strong sense of belonging to the setting. Nearly all children are happy and excited on arrival and separate well from their parents and carers. They are eager to arrive in the morning and are happy to embrace familiar practitioners. Children are familiar with the routine and expectations, which help them settle quickly and feel safe. Nearly all children develop a close and warm relationship with practitioners and respond eagerly as they join in with their play. The very few children who find it difficult to leave their parents or carers settle immediately when supported by practitioners who meet their needs successfully. Children are confident and comfortable when asking for support, for example to pour water into the large tub in the mud kitchen and when searching for suitable resources during their dinosaur hunt.

Nearly all children behave exceptionally well considering their ages and stages of development. They play together and alongside each other extremely successfully. They undertake tasks of their choosing and demonstrate mature social skills when offering to help and support each other. A good example of this is the way in which children help each other to put on an apron before preparing Mexican food and then share dough to make a 'fajita'.

Nearly all children show a high level of motivation and persistence when playing, particularly when they pursue their own ideas and experiment with resources both indoors and outdoors. They participate actively in exciting learning opportunities that enable them to learn, explore and discover very successfully. Nearly all children show increasing confidence when moving around the setting and selecting resources. They explore their environment independently and follow their interests freely. Most concentrate for an increasing amount of time when painting the shapes of numbers and letters and show enthusiasm and enjoyment when listening to Welsh stories and songs. Children concentrate for extended periods and show patience and perseverance when cutting vegetables to make soup with kitchen utensils and natural resources.

Nearly all children investigate confidently and show a willingness to try new activities for themselves. They have a good awareness of their environment and show a high level of resilience. They develop excellent independence skills, for example when pouring nutritious dinks at snack time and hammering a piece of ice to release the flowers. Nearly all reinforce their independent skills when cutting vegetables in the café, washing the baby and pouring water from the kettle into the saucepan successfully. Children are very familiar with the daily arrangements and tidy up and wash their hands regularly.

Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Excellent

Nearly all children, including those with additional learning needs, make excellent progress from their individual starting points.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their communication skills during their time at the setting. They listen attentively to practitioners and other children and respond appropriately to visitors. Most show an increasing interest in books and enjoy reading non-fiction books, including those about space, wild animals and food recipes. They know how to handle a book as a reader and understand that words and pictures have meaning. A few choose to look at books independently and others share books, they enjoy discussing the pictures.

Most children develop an early understanding of Welsh vocabulary. They follow simple instructions and join in enthusiastically with a wide range of songs and nursery rhymes. A few use Welsh independently in their play and snack time, for example when responding to questions about what they would like to eat and drink. They gain confidence as they experiment with using familiar Welsh vocabulary in their English sentences while playing; for example, when talking to a friend in the

café, saying “I haven’t got *hufen iâ* (ice cream)”. Most children who are reluctant to speak when they start at the setting are nurtured to develop their confidence quickly.

Nearly all children use a wide range of implements with increasing confidence and ability as they make marks. They make very good progress in this aspect of their learning. For example, they make notes in small books to take customers’ orders in the café and experiment with making marks to represent their names when painting. They control equipment with good co-ordination skills.

Nearly all children make very good progress in their mathematical development. They use mathematical language correctly in their play and develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, when filling cups with sand or water, they describe them as full or empty. Many children count to ten in Welsh confidently as they close their eyes before searching for dinosaurs, and count down from ten when launching a rocket. Nearly all children join in enthusiastically with a variety of number songs and nursery rhymes.

Most children consider how to solve problems and persevere to complete tasks well. For example, they try different methods when working out how to tighten a screw in the climbing frame and look for a friend to discuss a solution. Nearly all develop strong creative skills. They experiment confidently with dough and paint stones independently in the craft cabin.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills exceptionally well. They use a range of outdoor equipment skilfully to improve their co-ordination skills. They work well together when helping to push each other on the tyre swing, when playing going backwards and forwards underneath a friend’s legs, or when running in the nearby park. Nearly all develop their fine motor skills successfully, for example when matching small wooden sticks with holes or as they look for different keys to open a variety of locks.

By using a wide range of equipment, nearly all children develop their digital skills effectively, including using torches skilfully to explore outer space in the dark shed and role-playing with mobile phones to talk to mum.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners work extremely well to keep children safe and healthy. They have very good knowledge and awareness of relevant policies and procedures to keep children safe. They have sound knowledge of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. They complete relevant and detailed records of accidents and incidents. They also record details about the specific health needs of individual children, including information about any medication, if necessary. Leaders keep an accurate attendance record of practitioners and children and a record of visitors. They supervise children very successfully and conduct fire drills, all of which contribute to safe provision for children. The setting’s arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners ensure daily opportunities for children to spend time outdoors, whatever the weather. They promote healthy lifestyles effectively, including providing healthy snacks and drinks and ensure that water is available at all times. Practitioners take advantage of the setting's appropriate arrangements to deal with any allergies and injuries.

Practitioners are caring and supportive. They interact with children in a warm, constructive and friendly manner and create a positive, happy atmosphere with a strong sense of belonging. Practitioners speak to children calmly and respectfully and provide an excellent example of social skills. For example, practitioners model good manners when offering children a healthy snack, encouraging them to respond positively by emulating the courtesy when they receive their food. Practitioners follow the behaviour management policy in an excellent way by using positive techniques to deal with minor incidents. For example, practitioners encourage children to use 'kind hands' as they guide them to think about their behaviour, and this is adhered to by the children. As a result, children learn how to manage their own behaviour in an environment that fosters and promotes respect for others extremely successfully.

Practitioners succeed in meeting the needs of all children, including those with additional learning needs. They have very good arrangements in place to support children and their families. Practitioners work effectively with external agencies, such as the local authority's advisory teachers, and act on the advice of specialists. As a result, all children make excellent progress in their development.

Leaders and practitioners respond very well to children's needs. They plan an exciting variety of relevant activities and experiences for all areas of learning and development. They play extremely effectively with the children to support their learning experiences. For example, they take advantage of children's interest in outer space and have created a dark corner where children and adults play together and discover planets, moon dust and footprints successfully by torchlight. A wide variety of resources such as books, toys and 'authentic' materials are used to extend and reinforce Welsh vocabulary. Practitioners understand the importance of allowing children to continue to play and investigate for extended periods when they are engrossed in an activity. Practitioners intervene skilfully in supporting children's play experiences and their next steps in development very effectively.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Excellent

Practitioners provide a rich variety of high-quality learning experiences that align well with children's stage of development. They consider children's interests when planning new activities and ensure that there are beneficial opportunities for children to return to areas to practise their skills. Provision encourages children to be curious and enthusiastic in their learning, and play areas provide suitable support and challenge for children at every stage of their development. They ensure beneficial opportunities to develop children's numeracy and communication skills naturally in areas that are full of purposeful and diverse resources. For example, there are invaluable opportunities to discuss numbers and developing mark making skills while

taking food orders in the café. Practitioners plan an exciting and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment that allows children to make choices about where they would like to learn.

An excellent feature of provision is the quality of the working relationship between practitioners and children. They support children's learning by playing alongside them. Practitioners model behaviour very effectively and set high expectations in terms of children's social skills. They remind children regularly of how to forge relationships and how to be a good friend. As a result, children work together extremely skilfully and develop mature interpersonal skills. The setting promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Practitioners focus on honesty, fairness and respect and ensure that children understand the need to treat each other, their environment and their resources with care.

Practitioners know when to stand back and observe and when to intervene to develop children's skills. This creates a lively working environment where children are given valuable opportunities to immerse themselves in their play and learning. Practitioners plan learning opportunities that take advantage of children's interests successfully and encourage them to take risks and try new things. On the whole, practitioners encourage children to respond through appropriate questioning. In the best practice, practitioners takes advantage of beneficial opportunities to encourage children to think for themselves, for example by asking them how an astronaut could reach the moon. However, overall, practitioners have a tendency to use closed questions which limit children's ability to think for themselves and develop their ideas further.

An excellent feature of provision is practitioners' ability to pursue children's learning pathways in the moment, allowing children to lead their own learning. They use children's interests successfully as an inspiration to nurture imagination, encourage curiosity and extend their skills in areas across the curriculum. A good example of this is the enthusiasm that evolved following a child's passion and wonder when discovering a dinosaur egg in the sand. This led to an infectious buzz, with an urgent need to discover more dinosaurs around the setting, children used binoculars and a video recorder to film the event.

Practitioners use visits to the local area effectively and welcome visitors regularly. These experiences develop children's knowledge of their area and the wider world. For example, visits by a local gardener to support children's understanding of how to care for plants have led to enthusiasm in planting and growing vegetables and flowers. The outdoor environment provides a number of excellent opportunities for children to develop a sense of curiosity and wonder towards nature. Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to celebrate different customs and beliefs, in addition to learning about the lives of others by establishing dedicated areas to discover more about countries such as Mexico. They also learn about Welsh heritage and culture by planning activities to welcome the National Eisteddfod to the area. Practitioners have high expectations of what children can do. They show sound understanding of child development and identify their individual needs and strengths

very well. Through ongoing observations and assessments, they identify effectively where children need additional support or challenge.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders provide a rich learning environment for children. There are a variety of valuable and challenging opportunities for them to develop a wide range of skills, particularly their independence and problem-solving skills. Leaders and practitioners organise play areas that stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to investigate and experiment successfully. They provide a warm and friendly environment which is maintained to a very high standard. Leaders have created a very strong sense of belonging. There are seamless indoor and outdoor play areas which enable children to move around wholly independently.

Leaders prioritise children's safety continuously. They ensure that robust procedures are in place which ensure that any potential risks are monitored and managed very effectively. Thorough risk assessments outline the potential dangers and the steps taken to reduce or prevent the risk to children. Managers and practitioners complete daily checks to ensure that there are no obvious hazards.

Leaders provide high-quality resources. They set them out in a way that enables children to choose independently without the support of an adult. Practitioners make very effective use of 'authentic' natural resources and materials which develop children's imagination and curiosity to experiment and discover. For example, they freeze real flowers in blocks of ice to encourage children to experiment with different tools to get them out. The outdoor play area provides a wide variety of purposeful and exciting opportunities that stimulate children to explore and develop their creativity effectively. They have recently adapted a shed in the outdoor area to represent space after children expressed an interest in the planets. This has inspired children to be curious and has provided beneficial opportunities to develop children's mathematical, literacy, physical and social skills. They also place suitable books in the areas that attract attention and support children's development effectively.

The attention and care given by practitioners when creating areas in the outdoors to support children's well-being are excellent. They provide a very good range of resources that raise children's awareness of different cultures and the wider world effectively. For example, there are costumes from different cultures for role play, books about different religions and multimedia dolls and puppets in the indoor and outdoor areas to enrich play. They have created a Mexican role-play area that is changed regularly, creating an excellent sense of being in a different country or culture. They enrich children's understanding of different celebrations well.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders succeed in creating a caring and friendly ethos where children thrive and reach their potential. They have a clear vision for the setting which gives purposeful priority to children's well-being. They ensure that everyone involved with the setting aims to provide high levels of care and support to all children. A clear focus is placed on children leading their play and learning in a stimulating and supportive

environment. Leaders have high expectations of themselves and others and are actively involved in all aspects of the setting's life and work. They monitor the quality of provision regularly and ensure that they maintain very high standards. Leaders give good consideration to the impact of poverty on children's well-being. They share resources, such as the setting's uniform, and contribute to a food bank and a toy exchange at Christmas. Leaders review and follow safe recruitment procedures when appointing new practitioners.

The setting's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are comprehensive and effective. They are based on first-hand evidence and identify clearly the strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders hold regular discussions with practitioners which ensures that everyone contributes to all aspects of the setting's work and that they have a strong voice in its development. Leaders prioritise areas for improvement very effectively and ensure that practitioners identify the impact they have on children's outcomes and well-being.

One of the setting's particular strengths is the quality of the teamwork and strong co-operation between practitioners and leaders. Practitioners are committed to continuous professional learning. They work diligently to ensure sound understanding of the latest research and are ready to adapt and experiment with their learning methods to provide a service of the highest quality for the children. Leaders provide regular opportunities for practitioners to develop their understanding and skills by attending joint training. This ensures that staff's teaching methods are consistent and that high quality professional interaction is maintained regularly. Leaders encourage practitioners to reflect and act on what they have learned. This contributes very effectively to ensuring high standards of well-being among staff and children.

Leaders have established a range of very effective partnerships which benefit children. They have strong links with parents and share relevant information about their child's day through an app. The open relationship ensures that parents are comfortable talking to leaders, which contributes successfully to ensuring that children are happy and settle well. They organise a review meeting with parents a few week after a child starts at the setting, which ensures that valuable information is shared and that practitioners are aware of children's interests. Practitioners work effectively with local schools to support transition arrangements. Leaders provide schools with useful information, which improves teachers' knowledge of children before they start. The setting benefits from close links with the local community and this helps leaders to provide rich and engaging learning experiences for children.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (http://careinspectorate.wales) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

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Publication date: 04/09/2024

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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Date Published 04/09/2024