Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Meithrinfa Hen Ysgol

The Old School, Chapel Street, Porthmadog, LL49 9DS

01766515909

Date(s) of inspection visit(s):

08/05/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Meithrinfa Hen Ysgol
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	72
Main language(s):	Welsh and English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider anticipates, identifies, and meets the Welsh language and culture needs of people.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children are happy and settled. They have formed positive relationships with staff and each other. They enjoy the activities available to them and are confident to ask staff for support if needed. They enjoy being at the setting and are confident to make choices about how to spend their time. They are learning positive social skills, concentrate well on tasks and are becoming independent.

Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They implement effective procedures to promote good hygiene and provide ample opportunities for children to spend time outdoors in the fresh air. However, not all staff have completed paediatric first aid training. Staff manage interactions positively and encourage good manners. They plan a variety of stimulating play experiences for the children to help them develop good social skills. However, on occasion children spend some time waiting during busier periods while staff complete routine tasks.

Leaders ensure the premises are secure, welcoming and in good condition. They have robust systems in place to monitor and manage risks and fire safety effectively. Leaders provide excellent

opportunities for exploring natural materials, experimenting and problem solving. They also provide ample opportunities for children to flourish in their skills development and learning about the world around them.

Leaders understand their responsibilities and strive to provide a high-quality service. They have a range of effective policies in place to ensure the setting is well run and staff understand their roles. Although staff feel supported, there are no formal records of individual staff supervision. Leaders ensure staff have plenty of opportunities to attend training and develop their confidence and skills. Leaders have established positive partnerships with parents, ensuring they are well informed about their children's learning and development.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children are happy, settled and have formed close bonds with staff and their peers. They feel confident to express their wants and needs, knowing that staff will respect their wishes. For example, children are confident to ask for support to add more water to the water tray knowing staff will help them use the outdoor tap to fill up their pots. Children move freely between the activities available to them and influence how to spend their time at the setting. For example, they decided which activities to participate in whilst playing outdoors, choosing between experimenting with the water and pipes, junk modelling or playing in the mud kitchen.

Children feel valued as staff celebrate their achievements and value what they have to say. Children are excited to share stories with staff and point out the things that interest them in the environment, knowing staff will show enthusiasm for what they have to say. Children are eager to share their achievements with staff. For example, one child was enthusiastic to play music on the kettle drum and smiled proudly when staff praised them. Children are confident to approach visitors to talk about what they are doing as they feel secure in their surroundings.

Children are eager to involve their friends and staff in their play. They are developing positive social skills and cooperate well together. For example, when creating models using recycled boxes and bottles, children were excitedly instructing each other on what models to make and which parts to use. They shared and took turns well whilst using the scissors and tape and were eager to see each other's models when they had finished. Children are making friends and chat together throughout the sessions, sharing lots of smiles and laughter as they do so. For example, they chatted together at lunch time about what they wanted to play after lunch and thoroughly enjoyed acting out parts of a story, pretending to search for a bear. Younger children worked together to uncover shells in the sand tray.

Children enjoy their play and concentrate well on tasks. For example, babies have lots of fun and persevere well whilst placing wooden pegs in the shape sorter, clapping when they manage to place the shapes successfully. Older children concentrate and persevere well whilst using the climbing apparatus, trying again if they don't manage to make it all the way across the first time and cheering when they manage to complete the whole course.

Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their independence skills by completing tasks for themselves. For example, they wash their hands and wipe their faces after mealtimes, they put on their own shoes and help to put on their own sun cream before going outside to play.

Care & Development — Good

Staff understand and follow the setting's procedures effectively to keep children safe and healthy. They answer safeguarding scenarios confidently and understand the correct procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child. During the inspection, not all staff had updated their safeguarding to the required Group B training as outlined in the National Minimum Standards. We received evidence after the inspection that these staff members have since completed the required training. Most have completed emergency paediatric first aid training. However, not all staff have completed this training as outlined in the NMS. Any accidents and incidents that do occur are well recorded using an online application. Accident reports are sent straight over to parents and parents acknowledge they have received the report.

Staff promote healthy eating and hydration. They ensure children have access to their drink bottles throughout the session and provide healthy snacks and lunches, such as beef casserole with vegetables and cheese, breadsticks and fruit. They implement effective hygiene procedures, for instance, they ensure the tables are cleaned thoroughly with antibacterial spray between activities. They also ensure children wash their hands as and when required, thus reducing the risk of cross infection. Staff ensure children spend plenty of time outdoors in the fresh air by making good use of the outdoor spaces and going out for regular walks around the local area. Leaders ensure there are enough staff within each playroom at all times. However, during busier times and transition periods, staff did not always ask for additional support and children were not engaged in activities while they waited for staff to complete routine tasks.

Staff have positive relationships with children. They speak to children with warmth and affection. They are kind, provide comfort and reassurance when children need it and treat them with respect. Staff use consistent strategies to encourage positive interactions. They model positive social skills throughout each day, use consistent praise and give clear instructions whilst explaining to children when their behaviour is not appropriate. For example, when children have minor disagreements over toys, staff support them to take turns appropriately using sand timers and giving praise when they manage to do so positively.

Staff know the children well and respond to their individual needs effectively. Comprehensive details about children's preferences and individual needs are sought prior to them starting and this information is used to plan a variety of activities and experiences that children will enjoy. There are effective procedures in place for ensuring children with additional learning needs have enough support and staff respond extremely positively to meet children's individual needs.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders prioritise children's safety and ensure staff follow procedures effectively to safeguard children. For example, visitors are required to sign in on arrival and they ensure the premises, including the outdoor areas are safe and secure. This prevents any unauthorised access to the premises. Accurate registers are kept of staff and children's attendance. Leaders have comprehensive written risk assessments in place. These outline any potential risks to the children's safety and the action taken to manage or eliminate these risks. These documents are reviewed regularly, and any actions required are completed promptly, ensuring all potential hazards are monitored and managed effectively. Daily checks are also completed and recorded by staff prior to children using each area.

Leaders are motivated and dedicated to providing an environment that is stimulating and encourages learning through play. They have created a wide variety of exciting, inviting, and innovative spaces. All areas encourage exploration, problem solving and help children to flourish. There is an emphasis on using natural and real-life materials and resources, providing children with a highly stimulating environment which helps then learn about the world around them. For example, there are a vast variety of real kitchen utensils in each role play area and there are a wide range of experiences where children can explore and experiment with natural materials such as mud, sand, water, shells, wood and feathers. Leaders also ensure there are plenty of toys and resources which promote children's understanding of different cultures, such as musical instruments, books, jig saws and dolls.

Each room is effectively designed to meet the needs and ages of the children. For example, the baby room has more comfortable flooring and cushions for the younger children to sit and crawl around safely. The natural shelter provides space for children to play games, have food or experiment with the materials and activities available, whilst a wooden hut within the shelter provides a cosy area for children who may not want to enjoy quieter activities. The outdoors is a real strength of the setting and leaders have worked hard to create this inspiring space where children thrive and develop lots of skills, confidence, and self-esteem. Leaders provide children with plenty of resources which help them to develop their physical skills, such as bikes, climbing apparatus, spinning toys and balancing toys. All toys and resources are clean and well-maintained.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders share a clear vision with staff and have a good range of policies and procedures in place, which contribute effectively to the smooth running of the setting. The statement of purpose provides a clear description of the service offered. This enables parents to make an informed decision about whether the setting meets theirs and their child's needs. All policies and documents are reviewed annually, and the date is recorded so leaders can monitor the frequency effectively.

Leaders have effective arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. They seek feedback verbally from parents as well as through sending questionnaires to parents and staff. Feedback is also sought from children by talking to them and conducting daily observations. Leaders create a report in response to the feedback received, identifying any improvements made to date and those planned.

Leaders ensure staff feel supported and work well as a team. Staff files contain the required information, demonstrating safe recruitment checks are in place. Staff told us that they can approach leaders at any time to discuss any problems or training needs. However, there are no formal records of individual staff supervision meetings. Leaders ensure staff have opportunities to attend training and encourage professional development. Staff told us they are regularly offered training that interests them and helps support them in their roles. For example, they were due to receive training on using sign language to help support younger children and those with additional communication needs.

Leaders have effective systems in place for communicating with parents, keeping them well informed about their child's time at the setting. Staff communicate effectively with parents, providing verbal feedback when they collect children and through private messages. They also use a dedicated app to send photographs and messages to parents. Strong links are in place with the local schools and the community, thus allowing children to gain a sense of belonging.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

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

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Ensure all staff have completed the relevant paediatric first aid training as outlined in the NMS.

Best Practice

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Recommendation(s)
To ensure staff are confident to ask for help and support when needed, especially during busier times of the day.
Keep a record of individual staff supervision meetings to evidence these take place regularly.

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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