Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

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

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Ysgol Yr Hendy

Ysgol Yr Hendy
Heol Iscoed
Hendy
Pontarddulais
Carmarthenshire
SA4 0XD

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cylch Meithrin Ysgol Yr Hendy

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Ysgol Yr Hendy
Category of care provided	Sessional care
Registered person(s)	Cylch Meithrin Ysgol yr Hendy
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Deborah Thomas
Person in charge	Helen Clement
Number of places	16
Age range of children	Two-and-a-half years to school age
Number of 3 and 4-year-old children	13
Number of children who receive funding for early education	8
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday 8:45-11:45
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	Welsh
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service provides the ‘Active Offer’ for the Welsh language. It provides a service that anticipates, identifies and meets the needs of those who use the service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	Not applicable. This is its first inspection since its re-registration.
Date of previous Estyn inspection	November 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03/10/2023

Summary

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

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Adapt the outdoor area to provide extensive opportunities for children to develop their creative skills

R2 Ensure that leaders use a suitable procedure to share information with parents and carers regularly about what their children do at the setting

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children feel happy at the setting and settle well there. Most smile on arrival and the very few who are uncertain settle quickly once they are comforted by practitioners.

Nearly all are familiar with the daily arrangements and follow the procedures appropriately. For example, the children take off their coats and bags on arrival and self-register by placing their picture on the registration tree with a little support.

Nearly all children enjoy themselves within their learning and play environment. For example, during free play, they move confidently between the activities that are available to them while pursuing their interests. They choose their favourite focus area and engage meaningfully with the activities they have chosen.

Nearly all children form positive relationships with practitioners, which has a beneficial effect on their well-being. Most develop strong relationships with other children, for example while playing together to build a tower.

Most children are happy to play together and with practitioners at the setting. They enjoy talking casually with each other during snack time and interact effectively. For example, while playing with a toy farm, they work as a team and give each other pieces to set out. They take advantage of the wide selection of activities and free play opportunities they are given in the main room, in addition to some activities in

the outdoor area. These include an Autumn hunt, where they find hibernating animals that are hiding in different places. They like playing in the indoor role-play area and write a shopping list, along with making drinks and food in the outdoor mud kitchen. Many children persevere well with activities for periods that are appropriate for their stage of development. Children show pride in their work, for example when showing practitioners the dough models they have made of a hedgehog and a spider.

Most children develop appropriate independence and self-help skills. They guide their play by choosing activities and completing tasks while role-playing, painting and building with blocks. Many meet their personal needs well by pouring drinks confidently and spreading butter on crackers during snack time.

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

Nearly all children make good progress during their time at the setting. They develop sound personal, social and emotional skills and play nicely with each other.

Nearly all children listen attentively to practitioners and respond appropriately to their instructions during sessions and activities. Considering their linguistic backgrounds, most begin to use Welsh words appropriately in different contexts during play, particularly when talking about colours and shapes. Most show a keen interest in books, enjoy their content and handle them appropriately and with respect. Nearly all experiment confidently when making marks during their play by using various materials such as paints, crayons, or dry soil. A few begin to understand the functions of writing when trying to copy a few letters and recognise the first letter of their name confidently.

Most children begin to use simple mathematical language in relevant contexts, such as comparing big and small leaves in the forest area. Most count up to five objects confidently, with a few counting further. For example, they enjoy counting the numbers of frogs in boxes during discussion time or finding a picture of a specific number of fruit during the Hungry Caterpillar story. Nearly all participate confidently in various number songs and nursery rhymes.

Most children are familiar with using technological resources in their everyday play and activities and do so fairly confidently. For example, they control small electronic cars by pressing the appropriate buttons to move them backwards and forwards. Many use a CD player and headphones to listen to songs and electronic books that remind them of previous tasks based on the current theme.

Most children develop good physical skills. For example, they imitate Siani Sionc making gestures on a television screen. They play happily in the outdoor area and follow a path sensibly when going from one place to another. Most have the confidence to ‘have a go’ and are not afraid to make mistakes. Nearly all develop their fine motor skills well and handle small equipment confidently.

Most children develop their problem-solving skills appropriately. For example, they choose and use the materials they need to undertake specific tasks, such as making a tunnel from wooden blocks or junk materials.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners provide the children with good care and support and there is a very close and natural relationship between them. They know the children very well and respect their interests, preferences and personal requirements. They respond sensitively to children who choose not to take part in specific activities.

Practitioners prioritise the children's health and safety successfully. They understand their roles and responsibilities well and implement the setting's policies and procedures effectively. Leaders ensure that the staffing ratios are always suitable and this has a positive effect on the care that practitioners provide. Practitioners follow the appropriate procedures when admitting children at the beginning of the session and handing them over safely to their parents and carers at the end of the morning. All practitioners have up-to-date first aid and food hygiene certificates, which ensures their understanding of the processes to be followed. Hygiene procedures and practices are effective and practitioners encourage children to wash their hands independently at the appropriate times.

The setting promotes healthy eating and drinking habits during snack time and encourages the children to exercise, for example by imitating the movements of a television character. All practitioners have completed child protection training and are aware of the appropriate steps to take. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners keep suitable records of accidents and incidents. These records include the signatures of practitioners, parents or carers. They evaluate accidents and incidents regularly to identify any patterns seen over time. Practitioners hold occasional fire drills so that the children can familiarise themselves with the procedures.

Practitioners provide a homely environment at the setting, which fosters care and shows respect. Practitioners have a thorough understanding of the behaviour management policy and act as good role models. They interact positively with the children, showing them warmth and kindness. They praise the children often, which has a positive effect on their self-confidence. They encourage the children to be independent in a kind and sensitive manner. Practitioners follow effective processes to identify and support the individual needs of children, including those with additional learning needs.

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

Practitioners plan an appropriate range of stimulating and interesting learning opportunities for the children. This enables them to develop their curiosity in a homely and safe environment. They often consider the children's ideas when planning suitable tasks for them in a variety of timely contexts, such as nature in the autumn.

Practitioners have high expectations of all children. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their developmental needs. They use this information successfully to develop the children's skills in specific areas, such as early numeracy,

literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). These experiences are based on the principle of learning through play and usually build directly on the children's current knowledge, understanding and skills.

All practitioners provide children with regular opportunities to hear and use Welsh vocabulary and phrases continuously and encourage them consistently to respond in Welsh. This is a strong element of the provision.

The setting promotes the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. Practitioners create activities that encourage them to use their curiosity and to focus specifically on the wonder of the world in a variety of contexts, such as studying nature during the different seasons. They promote children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture effectively. They present specific songs and activities to celebrate festivals in turn, such as St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day. Practitioners focus on honesty, fairness and respect and teach the children that they need to treat each other, their environment and their resources with care. Activities to develop the children's social skills are very good. These include giving them an opportunity to take responsibility for tidying up at the end of the session, putting out the plates and taking turns to pour milk during snack time.

Practitioners provide children with continuous opportunities to move completely naturally between the activities that are provided indoors. For safety reasons, opportunities for them to move freely to the outdoor area are limited. Children are given occasional and sensible opportunities to learn about dangers, for example by observing an adult lighting a fire in the forest.

Practitioners observe the children's progress regularly. They use this information appropriately, although often informally, to plan the next steps that meet their needs and interests.

Environment: Good

Practitioners ensure that the learning environment is safe for the children. They ask visitors to sign in promptly and keep a detailed record of these registers. Practitioners complete relevant risk assessments for the building, the outdoor area and for specific activities.

Practitioners ensure that the environment is welcoming and homely for the children. Displays are attractive and create a strong sense of belonging. For example, they display the children's creative work and photographs of them taking part in their tasks. They organise the indoor environment purposefully to ensure that the areas are varied, interesting and stimulating to provide valuable learning experiences for the children. Practitioners have divided the room into a number of attractive areas to capture the children's interest and imagination. They have ensured that there are specific areas for children to develop their creative skills, rest and socialise with each other.

Leaders have ensured that the learning environment is of good quality and provides a range of valuable learning opportunities for the children. The role-play area, for example, promotes the practice of developing the children's real-life skills by giving

them the opportunity to use China dishes and fresh fruit and vegetables. The setting has a wide range of toys and various learning resources which are in good condition. Practitioners use the various resources effectively to develop the children's literacy, numeracy and digital skills. However, the resources that are available for the children to learn about different cultures and diversity are limited.

Leaders make good use of most of the space available to them. They ensure that the children have occasional access to the limited outdoor area. However, as the outside area is so confined, it does not allow practitioners to develop the children's creative skills sufficiently. They provide rich weekly opportunities for children to attend practical sessions in the primary school's forest area.

The leader and practitioners ensure that the setting is tidy, clean and attractive. The furniture, equipment, toys and resources are of good quality and are stored at a level that is suitable for the children to encourage their independence. The setting has purposeful facilities for individuals to wash and dry their hands which, in turn, provides regular opportunities to encourage children to become more independent.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders are very experienced and set high expectations for the practitioners. They provide them with rich opportunities to develop professionally and encourage them to do the best for the children. They have a clear vision and sensible objectives for the setting. These are based on 'providing them with care and education of a high standard in a safe and stimulating environment so that they have experiences and opportunities to learn through play'. They convey this vision successfully and ensure that the practitioners work together effectively as a team in a happy and Welsh environment. Leaders value the importance of developing the children's Welsh language skills and, with the complete commitment of the practitioners, do so consistently and effectively. This is one of the setting's main qualities.

All practitioners take pride in having worked at this setting for many years. As a result, they have created a happy and homely environment where all practitioners feel valued by the leaders, parents and children.

The leader works closely with the officers of the management committee and staff at the local primary school. This ensures that they are also aware of what is provided there. Leaders promote safe practices and a sound culture of safeguarding and suitable policies have been established to ensure that the children and practitioners are safe.

Leaders manage staff and resources effectively. They identify practitioners' roles and responsibilities clearly, there are good ratios of adults to children and the setting has appropriate contingency plans in case staff are absent. The setting makes effective use of the funding it receives to employ practitioners and purchase suitable resources which have a positive effect on children's standards.

Leaders have a suitable procedure to evaluate the setting's work. All practitioners are part of this procedure and discuss what they consider they are doing well regularly, in addition to areas for development. As well as considering the views of practitioners,

leaders also consider the views of parents and carers through questionnaires and other means. They use the outcomes of this procedure to prioritise clearly the issues they would like to improve and have an effective strategy to enable them to do this.

All practitioners have a close partnership with parents and carers. They have an open-door policy and are always willing to share important information with parents and carers about the setting's policies and procedures. However, the information they share with them about what they children do at the setting on a daily basis is limited.

The setting has a highly effective partnership with the local primary school in which it is situated to facilitate teaching and to support the transition process. For example, a members of the school's staff provides sessions for the setting's children in the forest area. This enriches their learning experiences and helps the children when the time comes for them to transfer to the primary school.

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

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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.

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We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

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

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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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