A Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru Care Inspectorate Wales report on

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

Camau Cyntaf - First Steps Cylch Meithrin Rhydyfelin

Holly Street
Rhydyfelin
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 5DB

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Camau Cyntaf - First Steps Cylch Meithrin Rhydyfelin

Name of setting	Camau Cyntaf – First Steps Rhydyfelin
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Lisa Thomas
Person in charge	Chloe Walker
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2-5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	19
Number of children funded for early education	19
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8:45am to 15:15pm
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Welsh and English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service is working towards providing the Welsh Language 'Active Offer' and demonstrates an effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture
Date of previous CIW inspection	25 October 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	June 2016
Date(s) of this/these inspection visit(s)	09/05/2023

Summary

Theme	Rating
Well-being	**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	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Strengthen practitioners' Welsh language skills to expand children's vocabulary during play times

R2 Ensure that assessments celebrate children's successes and recognise their progress from their starting point

What happens next

The setting will produce an action plan showing how it will implement the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Most children feel happy at the setting and cope when they arrive and have to leave their parents and carers. They are confident in making choices and taking part in different activities across all elements of the provision. Most children know that their wishes are respected by practitioners. Children move resources such as paint and water from one area to another to make marks on paper and others change the colour of the water in the water tub.

Most children express themselves well when sharing their ideas, feelings and wishes. Children choose not to sit down to eat as they are immersed in their play experiences. Most children are familiar with the daily routine and have a positive relationship with practitioners. Children are comforted by practitioners before going to play comfortably. Many develop good manners, for example, they say ‘diolch’ for an outline of a royal crown to decorate with multicoloured glitter.

Many children develop a good relationship with their friends. They interact maturely shouting ‘helo’ to each other happily. They show respect and sensitivity towards their friends. Many help each other at snack time and when trying to put on shoes on the climbing frame. Most children are happy to share resources and learn social skills successfully at meal times. They show pride when they receive praise for their work. Many children smile happily when practitioners give them a thumbs up during circle time. Children enjoy hearing practitioners shout ‘hwre’ at them after they say their names.

Almost all children enjoy their play and learning very much. They concentrate and persevere well when undertaking experimenting and exploring tasks. Children concentrate for extended periods when undertaking a mark-making activity by pressing paint and rolling cars to make multicoloured tracks. Most children are curious about the experiences. Children are excited when racing bikes and others immerse themselves in their play with large dinosaurs. Children use squirting equipment and experimenting materials confidently when creating an erupting volcano in the sand area and making tea with real lemon juice.

Almost all children choose activities independently and follow their interests effectively. The majority of children hang their coat and bag on the peg and fetch their coats when they go outside to play. Most children collect and return their crockery during snack time. Almost all children pour their drink and choose their nutritious food independently and they also spread butter on their bread or cracker.

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

Most children make good progress from their starting point and try enthusiastically to develop their skills while playing. Many come from disadvantaged homes and during initial assessments a high percentage of pupils display a variety of learning needs. However, they show natural enjoyment and engagement when undertaking activities and manage to benefit from the interesting learning opportunities provided.

Most children are confident in expressing themselves verbally and they talk happily while playing. In the outdoor area, they control bikes skilfully as they ride around objects. When experimenting and investigating, they show infectious curiosity when creating a track for cars to travel along. Many develop their physical skills successfully as they climb, slide and balance on the large outdoor equipment.

Many children show natural sensitivity while playing with their peers. They fully immerse themselves when collecting dandelions and appreciating the wonder of nature. Their social skills are developing appropriately and many manage to avoid conflict by changing the direction of their play or moving to different resources.

Most children are very independent when undertaking activities. They are very active when making lemon tea, exploring with the light and discovering crocodiles when sailing in a boat.

Many children's early writing and mark-making skills are developing appropriately. They use felt pens to practise making marks on a white board and draw colourful flowers. They develop their fine motor skills well by making less formal marks in the glitter.

Many demonstrate that they can listen for short periods to Welsh songs sung by practitioners. For example, they enjoy taking part in the song ‘Beth sydd yn y fasged siopa…?’ Almost all children are more comfortable following instructions in English and show a firm understanding of multi-use basic vocabulary.

Many children have specific language and speech needs and as a result, their ability to communicate intelligibly in both languages is less developed. However, they communicate successfully when playing with peers with many expressing their needs using gestures rather than words. Children with more developed oracy skills learn new vocabulary quickly and use it while playing.

Most pupils have good early reading skills. They show enjoyment while choosing books in the outdoor area and handle the pages intelligently. They hold books correctly and are fully engaged with the content. Children's engagement with books is a strength.

Many children take advantage of good opportunities to improve their understanding of the properties of 3D shapes. By playing creatively with wooden blocks and coloured shapes on the light board, they develop understanding of the properties of different shapes and how to use them when building. Some children can count confidently up to five in Welsh and are starting to recognise numerals.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners prioritise children's safety at all times. They implement effective procedures to ensure that children are both healthy and safe. They have all attended relevant child protection training, and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. In addition, all practitioners have completed paediatric first aid and food hygiene training. Fire drills are completed regularly and recorded effectively.

Practitioners make good use of up to date procedures to prevent the spread of infection. For example, practitioners encourage children to wash their hands after

being outside and before eating. They ensure that tables are disinfected before children sit to eat. They follow suitable procedures for changing nappies and when staff prepare and provide support at meal times. Practitioners promote physical activity successfully. They ensure that there are valuable opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and spend time outdoors.

Practitioners have developed a firm and respectful relationship with children. They are warm and kind and respond skilfully to children's needs and interests. They use consistent strategies to promote positive behaviour in accordance with the policy. For example, most practitioners model effective social skills by playing alongside the children and saying ‘diolch’ to them and encouraging children to say thank you for their food. They praise children regularly.

The setting has purposeful arrangements for identifying and supporting children's individual needs, including children with additional learning needs. Practitioners collect information about children's interests and developmental needs, and use the information to plan effectively for them. There are effective procedures in place for referring children in a timely manner to receive additional support from external agencies.

Practitioners track children's progress effectively and share information about their successes and progress with parents and carers. They use a secure online app which enables parents and carers to maintain regular contact with their children's experiences in the setting.

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

The setting has taken good steps to adapt its assessment methods to meet the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. The setting's assessment methods support practitioners to identify children with learning difficulties at a very early stage. They work well with parents to complete an initial assessment form and identify those children who are facing challenges in terms of language and speech development. They use all the information very effectively when applying for additional support for a child. Practitioners undertake regular assessments which form a detailed and effective record of children's development. However, assessments do not provide sufficient scope to celebrate children's successes or recognise children's progress from their starting point.

Practitioners have created a learning environment full of interesting and exciting experiences and succeed in developing children's interest. They have planned learning areas which encourage children to be independent and creative with opportunities for them to learn actively for long, uninterrupted periods. Practitioners show care and respect to children and support them sensibly to make decisions and choices. They encourage and support children's curiosity during their activities, for example, when mixing ingredients to create a volcano. Children are given opportunities to observe, experiment, take risks and make decisions in a kind and supportive way.

Practitioners have a sound understanding of what is expected when observing and assessing children's progress. They use the information collected to plan activities that promote children's development successfully. They observe children regularly using their findings to plan exciting and interesting learning experiences. For

example, after observing a child showing an interest in pasta and washing dishes, pasta was placed in the role play area and bubble blowing equipment was placed in the outdoor area. Although this approach has been established relatively recently, practitioners show a willingness to adapt their ways of working to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales.

Practitioners adapt their plans with increasing confidence to respond purposefully to children's needs and interests. They also use their understanding of children's repetitive behaviours and plan for those interests successfully. When observing children, practitioners are starting to use their understanding of the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and the principles of progression to deliver interesting and challenging experiences for children.

All practitioners have received training to develop their Welsh language skills. They are very committed to developing their verbal skills and as their skills increase, the impact of the training influences their confidence to use Welsh target vocabulary with children. However, their linguistic confidence is under-developed at present.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders prioritise children's safety at all times. They ensure that very sound procedures are in place to ensure that any potential risks are monitored and managed very effectively. Detailed risk assessments outline potential risks and the action being taken to reduce or prevent any risk to children. Managers and practitioners complete daily checks to ensure that there are no obvious risks.

The setting is safe, welcoming, warm and very effectively maintained. The indoor and outdoor play areas are open and unrestricted encouraging children's curiosity as they move around freely and easily. The indoor and outdoor area has been set out very carefully and purposefully. They ensure that there are a wide range of activities to enrich experiences successfully. A range of ‘real’ resources and equipment are available, including fruit, flowers, herbs, tea bags and crockery, when playing and eating. This enables children to develop their imagination. The outdoor play area provides a wide range of purposeful and exciting activities and opportunities for children. For example, areas for gardening, construction, reading, painting and mark-making, climbing, role play and a mud kitchen. The areas that develop children's curiosity include free-standing pieces, and scientific and creative exploring and discovering experiences.

Leaders ensure that there is a wide selection of interesting and exciting resources and equipment available for children. These are of high quality and are stored at a low level so that children can choose them independently without any adult intervention. Leaders make very effective use of natural resources and materials to enable children to experiment and discover. For example, there are excellent opportunities to experiment with herbs, flowers, fruit and tea bags during role play. In addition, there is a good range of resources to promote awareness of diversity and different cultures. Leaders ensure that there are very good opportunities for children to learn about the world around them while going for a nature walk around the premises. Resources relating to the wider world can be seen, for example, costumes from other cultures, books about different religions and multimedia dolls and puppets.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The setting is led extremely effectively by a team of people who understand their responsibilities thoroughly and work together very effectively for the benefit of children. The management team has created a firm system which ensures that all members of staff receive a wide-ranging training which helps them to understand their roles and responsibilities very effectively. Leaders have established very effective induction arrangements for practitioners, including a dedicated induction period and support from a mentor based at the setting. Then, new practitioners follow the ‘Passport to Excellence’ scheme organised by leaders to ensure that everyone receives the necessary training and information to fulfil their roles extremely successfully.

The setting's management team is very experienced, and supports the leader extremely well. The leader has benefited from the leadership team's wealth of knowledge and is willing to collaborate and trial new approaches.

Members of the leadership team spend a lot of time in the setting and meet with parents. They observe children during their activities and provide leadership and very beneficial training for practitioners. They work tirelessly and extremely effectively to ensure excellent support for all children with additional needs.

Leaders have established an effective self-appraisal process which includes input from all stakeholders. As a result, leaders have a very sound understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. A good example of this is that additional learning needs assessments are undertaken every term to identify areas for improvement. They use this information when planning activities to improve the provision.

Leaders operate an open door policy with practitioners working very effectively with parents. Parents and carers receive very regular information about their children's well-being and development via a useful electronic app. Parents state that they are very happy with the information shared and feel that they can turn to staff members at any time to ask for advice. Parents admire the way the setting identifies their children's needs early and appreciate the steps taken to ensure additional support.

The setting works very closely with the community. They have recently established a working relationship with a local supermarket where they contribute goods for the food bank at the entrance to the setting. The setting ensures that the bank has a supply of baby goods for those parents who need them. Parents benefit from the Welsh books library which has been set up in the entrance. Here, parents can choose books to take home to enjoy with their children and exchange them as they wish.

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 rating 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 Prysg (Welsh to English).

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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.

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

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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