Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

# Inspection Report

## Merllyn Childcare

Merllyn Cp School, Foel Gron,  Bagillt, CH6 6BB

01352733366

**The inspection visit took place on 30/09/2025**

## Service Information:

| | |
|---|---|
| Operated by: | Merllyn Childcare |
| Care Type: | Children's Day Care |
| Registered places: | 19 |
| Main language(s): | English |
| Flying Start service: | Yes |
| Receive funding to provide early years part time education: | No |
| Promotion of Welsh language and culture: | The service provider is not meeting the Welsh language and culture needs of people and this requires improvement. |

## Ratings:

| | |
|---|---|
| Well-being | Good |
| Care & Development | Good |
| Environment | Good |
| Leadership & Management | Adequate |

## Summary:

Children's wellbeing is promoted well through the care they receive. They have a voice as they confidently make choices and decisions. Children feel safe and have a strong sense of belonging as they develop friendships and valuable bonds with consistent staff. They interact well for their ages and stages of development, showing understanding and respect towards others. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop and learn a range of skills. They show enjoyment in their play and learning, engaging for an appropriate length of time on an activity they have chosen.

Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. They follow appropriate routines and know what is expected of them. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle through the resources, activities and routines implemented. Staff promote positive interactions and effectively good communication skills through modelling, questioning and providing sociable experiences. Staff ensure they get to know children well and provide care that caters for their individual needs.

Leaders provide a secure environment with risk assessments conducted so potential hazards are identified and managed effectively. The environment is suitable for the children and the neutral colours, and good maintenance provides a welcoming atmosphere. Leaders and staff work hard to create spaces for children that are inspiring and inviting. They use natural materials and authentic

resources effectively to further enhance children's play and learning.

Leaders have a clear understanding of how the setting operates and care provided. They have an effective self-evaluation procedure in place which they use constructively to identify meaningful and manageable improvements. Leaders have procedures in place to manage staff, but improvements are needed. Leaders and staff develop a positive relationship with parents and the school and these benefit the children.

# Findings:

## Well-being — Good

Children's wellbeing is promoted well through the care they receive. They communicate successfully using verbal and nonverbal cues. Children know they will be listened and responded to with understanding and respect by staff. They make choices and appropriate decisions about how they spend their time. For example, they move freely around the indoor and outdoor environments, choosing where and what they play with. Children follow their own routines and needs throughout the day. For example, they choose when to rest or if they would like more snack.

Children feel safe and have a strong sense of belonging. They develop valuable bonds with consistent staff who they feel confident and happy to approach for comfort, support or just to interact and share their experiences with. Children separate well from their parents or arrive from school glad to be attending the setting and pleased to see their friends and staff. They form meaningful friendships that further support them in feeling content and settled.

Children interact well for their ages and stages of development. They show understanding and respect towards others as they play together. For example, they share the space and toys cooperatively. Nearly all children are polite and learn to be well mannered with a little support from staff to remind them to say please and thank you at appropriate times. They are respectful with the resources, using them appropriately and helping to tidy up when asked. Children enjoy engaging and interacting as they play together. For example, when children were playing with the pumpkins, one child said, "*Do you want to take it home*?" Child responds "*Yes*" Child says, "*And me so I can decorate it for Halloween*".

Children show enjoyment in their play and learning. They engage and focus for an appropriate length of time on an activity they have chosen. Children follow their interests as they have access to a range of suitable activities and resources. For example, children focus on completing puzzles alongside a member of staff. They are keen to share their experiences with others. For example, a child was enjoying filling and emptying a kettle with water, showing others when it was nearly full and then laughing when they emptied it.

Children have appropriate opportunities to develop and learn a range of skills. Most resources are stored effectively to allow children to freely access them and children who are able use the toilet and handwashing facilities independently. Children have some independence during lunch and snack time as they feed themselves and access their drinks bottles. Children make good progress during their play. They enjoy being physical as they climb and balance and develop mathematical skills as they spontaneously talk about full and half full when playing in the water and sand.

## Care & Development — Good

Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities which ensures they keep children safe. They know the procedure to follow should they have any safeguarding concerns about a child in their care. Staff have the correct training to enable them to deal with minor accidents and incidents appropriately and these are recorded effectively and shared with parents. Staff follow appropriate routines and know what is expected of them. This helps to ensure children are always supervised well. Staff conduct regular fire drills. However, these are only completed alongside the school and mostly in the mornings, so some children do not have an opportunity to practice when at the setting.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle through the resources, activities and routines implemented. The snack provided is nutritious with fruits, bread sticks and water for drinks offered. Good hygiene practices are completed by staff to help prevent the spread of germs. For example, tables are cleaned before snack and lunch times and staff encourage and support children to wash their hands at appropriate times, including after using the toilet and before food.

Staff promote positive interactions and are caring towards the children, showing them understanding and respect. They effectively promote good communication skills through modelling, questioning and providing sociable experiences. Staff have lots of conversations with children about their interests and the activities they are doing throughout the day. For example, when children are observed cleaning pumpkins with a toothbrush staff ask questions such as, '*What do we have pumpkins for*?" and "*What do we usually use our toothbrushes for*?". Staff use age-appropriate behaviour management strategies to teach children to understand the importance of following rules and expectations, such as sharing. They effectively use praise to help children feel proud of their achievements. For example, staff praised children when they used their manners and said please and thank you at snack time.

Staff ensure they get to know the children well. The key worker system works effectively and benefits the children and the care they receive. Staff complete appropriate observations and record children's progress. They cater for children's individual needs well including any health or additional learning needs they may have. This includes working effectively with parents and outside agencies to support them in providing appropriate and tailored support when needed. Planning is completed by staff and usually follows a particular theme of topic. However, it does not always effectively consider the interests of the children. Staff provide a range of activities that support children to develop a range of skills through their play. For example, staff ensure children have access to equipment to develop their physical skills as they climb and their mark making skills as they draw and paint. Staff provide some opportunities for children to be independent. They ensure they can freely access resources, move around the environment, use facilities such as toilets and access their belongings independently. Staff encouraged children to be independent during routines, such as, allowing them to have a go at taking their shoes off before having their nappies changed. However, at snack time children are not involved in preparing or serving their snack or drinks.

## Environment — Good

Leaders provide a secure environment where children are safe. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted and hazards managed effectively. Some daily checks are completed so any potential new hazards can be identified, but these are not recorded consistently. Leaders and staff have appropriate routines they follow which protect children from potential risks. For example, external gates are locked, the entrance is controlled and children are sufficiently supervised when moving around the environment. Visitors are recorded and registers of staff and children's attendance are kept so everyone can be accounted for.

The environment is well maintained with any issues arising reported and dealt with in a timely manner. All areas used by the children are clean and decorated in neutral colours to help create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children's work is attractively displayed alongside photographs, giving children a sense of belonging and helping them to settle. The indoor environment is arranged effectively so children have space to play and move around safely. There is room for children to enjoy tabletop activities, floor games and use the areas of learning created without disrupting others. Children can freely access the toilet facilities and their belongings. The outdoor area is accessed through the main door and across a path. It is a safe space for children to use with secure fencing surrounding it. The recently erected shelter ensures children have an opportunity to be outside in all weathers. The outdoors is well maintained and a safe and inviting space for children.

Leaders and staff work hard to create spaces for children that are inspiring and inviting. They develop areas of learning that support children to be creative in their learning. For example, children enjoyed playing with the doll's house and completing puzzles at the table with a member of staff. Staff store resources appropriately to ensure they remain clean and of a good quality. Leaders and staff use authentic resources effectively to further enhance children's play and learning. For example, real brushes and jewellery enriched the dressing up area in the home corner. The environment has a suitable range of natural materials freely available for the children to access. There are sand and water trays and children enjoy creating artwork on the large cardboard box laid out on the table outside. There are some Welsh and multicultural resources available for children to help them to learn about different cultures and the world around them.

## Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders have a clear understanding of how the setting operates, and the care provided. Policies and procedures reflect current practice and guidance. Leaders have created an informative statement of purpose that gives parents what they need to decide if it is the right care for their child. They work closely with the committee, with regular meetings so information can be shared and support provided if needed.

Leaders have an effective procedure in place to evaluate their setting. They gain the views of parents, staff and outside agencies to support them in the process. Leaders identify meaningful and manageable improvements to help improve the setting and care provided. For example, they identified the outdoors as an area needing improvement. Positive changes have been made, and the children now benefit from an inviting and inspiring space to play.

Leaders develop a team of staff who work well together. They understand their daily roles and responsibilities which help the setting run smoothly. Leaders ensure all staff have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring service check (DBS) and suitable qualifications they need to work at the setting. However, staff files are not complete and there is missing information. Outcomes for children require improvement to ensure information to evidence the suitability of staff to care for children is available. We expect the provider to make improvements. Leaders regularly talk with staff and daily discussions happen naturally, so everyone is aware of what is happening and expected of them on that day. However, formal supervisions and appraisals do not happen consistently so training needs may not be identified and information not be shared. Therefore, outcomes for children require improvement as staff are not receiving the required support through supervisions and appraisals. We expect the provider to make improvements. Leaders make sure any new staff go through some form of induction procedure, but this is very basic and does not ensure all staff are fully aware of how the setting operates.

Leaders and staff develop a positive relationship that ensures parents are kept informed and feel comfortable to approach the setting for advice, support and information. Parents we spoke with said they are very happy with the setting and care their child received. They feel the staff are approachable and information is shared effectively. The setting operates from within the school grounds and the relationship leaders and staff create helps to ensure children have a smooth transition when they move up on their education. Children gain a sense of belonging within the community with visits to local areas of interest.

# 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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

| Summary of Areas for Improvement | Date identified |
|---|---|
| Children are being put at potential risk of harm as the Responsible Individual cannot evidence the staffs suitability to care for children. | 30/09/25 |
| We found staff were not receiving regular supervisions or appraisals. This could lead to training needs not being identified and staff not receiving the support they need. The responsible individual must provide evidence to CIW that they have a system in place that ensures staff have regular and meaningful supervisions and appraisals are held at least once a year. | |

**CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.**

# 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) |
|---|---|
| | No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection |

# 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 fire drills are conducted independently from the school so all children have an opportunity to take part. |
| To further develop planning to ensure it meets children's needs and considers the Welsh curriculum. |
| To further enhance opportunities for children to be independent at snack time. |
| To ensure daily checks on the environment are completed consistently so any potential hazards are identified and managed effectively. |

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