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

Camau Cyntaf - First Steps Penrhiwceibr

Penrhiwceibr Primary School
Mountain Ash
Abercynon
CF42 55B

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Camau Cyntaf - First Steps Penrhiwceibr

Name of setting	Camau Cyntaf - First Steps Penrhiwceibr
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Lisa Thomas
Person in charge	Catherine Williams
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2 – 3-year-olds
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	7
Number of children who receive funding for early education	6
Opening days / times	08:45 – 15:00 Monday to Friday
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service anticipates, identifies, and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use the service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	May 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	n/a
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/05/2024

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Good**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**n/a**
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 Further develop the use of observations to ensure that they are used to support children's learning and development effectively

R2 Provide effective opportunities for children to observe and develop curiosity about the natural world and learn how to care for living things

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children feel safe and valued in the inclusive environment provided by the setting. They know they are listened to, and their views are fully considered. Over time, they develop a sense of belonging and know that practitioners are responsive to their needs. Nearly all children enter the setting happily and separate from parents and carers with confidence. They are familiar with the daily routines of the setting, such as group time or snack time. Many approach their favourite areas of provision, both indoors and outside, where they follow their own interests and access resources confidently. For example, they choose to play in the water area and use the resources available to fill cups or hang items out to dry.

Most children form positive relationships with practitioners and approach them for reassurance and guidance when needed. Most children develop their personal and social skills effectively in line with their age and stage of development. They share resources and play alongside each other effectively with little support. For example, they share safety knives when cutting vegetables and take turns when using the trikes. A few are beginning to play collaboratively such as when they use blocks to build together.

Many children communicate with growing confidence and express their needs successfully. Most older children respond well to the effective language support provided by practitioners, and this helps them to develop their language skills. For

example, they use a growing variety of rich vocabulary such as telescope and stargazing when looking at a favourite book.

Nearly all children manage their behaviour well and listen to practitioners' instructions effectively. They are beginning to recognise and talk about feelings such as when they describe the emotions of dolls or characters in their role play. Many children maintain their focus successfully and persevere for extended periods of time whilst leading their own play. Children have good opportunities to develop independence, which allows them to do things for themselves. For example, most can put on their own coats, wash their hands, and serve themselves water and milk when having snack.

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

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Good

Leaders and practitioners have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They have a clear understanding of the setting's policies and procedures and implement these effectively. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners ensure the safety of the environment by completing daily checks of the indoor and outdoor areas. They supervise children well and the setting often exceeds the required ratio of adults to children. They have successfully completed first aid training and record accidents and incidents efficiently. Practitioners understand their responsibilities in administering, recording, and storing medication safely. They have completed appropriate food hygiene training, and their procedures are consistently good. Practitioners ensure dignity and privacy while following the nappy changing policy and keep effective records of procedures followed. They have an effective and organised registration system including ensuring that all necessary consent records are in place.

Practitioners have developed warm and nurturing relationships with children and treat them with care and respect. They are kind, calm, and embrace a joyful approach to their work. As a result, laughter between practitioners and children can often be heard. Practitioners encourage children to behave appropriately and learn to share and take turns. They regularly praise children, which has a positive impact on the development of their skills and self-confidence. During snack time children are offered opportunities to socialise with practitioners around dedicated tables, discussing likes and dislikes and ensuring positive behaviour.

Practitioners know the children well and have a clear understanding of their individual needs and wants. They actively encourage children to communicate, and any communication is responded to positively and swiftly. Practitioners observe children sensitively and effectively and recognise when to question, offer explanations and

ideas to encourage children to think and solve problems. They advance children's conversation through purposeful questioning.

Practitioners successfully support children with additional learning needs through effective links with external agencies including speech and language therapists and health visitors. Guidance offered through regular meetings is acted upon efficiently by practitioners. They plan and provide interesting activities and experiences that promote the children's learning and overall development successfully.

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

Practitioners provide a welcoming and engaging learning environment both indoors and outdoors that inspires children's curiosity and exploration in many aspects of the curriculum. They have developed areas of provision thoughtfully to promote choice and independence. For example, a creative area provides a range of materials and tools which support children's individual expression well.

Practitioners support the development of children's communication and language skills successfully. They use a range of beneficial strategies to reenforce and extend children's language as they play. Practitioners build on children's interest in stories effectively by providing books throughout the environment and in the cosy reading area. They regularly read to children and talk about their favourite books as they look at the pictures together. This encourages children to handle books independently. The setting provides many opportunities for children to develop early mark making skills such as paint, chalk and water.

Practitioners support children's digital skills successfully through opportunities to explore a range of equipment such as lightboards and digital cameras. They engage children in singing and rhyming activities that support their development across the curriculum suitably. For example, children develop their Welsh language and numeracy skills appropriately as they recite numbers when singing songs in English and Welsh. Practitioners plan activities that promote the cultural heritage of Wales appropriately, for example through celebrating events such as St David's Day and taking part in creative activities such as decorating love spoons.

The setting supports children's creative development well. Practitioners provide a range of materials and tools that enable children to explore a range of media such as dough, paint and collage effectively. A variety of musical instruments such as a digital keyboard and small harp encourage children to explore sound including tone and range successfully.

Practitioners are beginning to reflect children's interests within learning experiences effectively. They observe children's play and make a few adaptations to provision in response. For example, they provide bandages to the role play area after noticing children pretending to look after a sick doll. This supports and extends children's learning effectively.

A range of learning experiences promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development suitably. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder

in children when they encourage them to observe a broken eggshell found on the way to nursery. Practitioners provide children with a few natural resources to explore such as shells and pinecones. They provide a few opportunities for children to learn about living things such as watering the plants. However, overall. opportunities for children to learn about the natural world and how to care for living things from first hand experiences are limited.

Overall, practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of foundation learning. They provide children with ample time to follow their interests and lead their own play. Nearly all practitioners support children's social development well. They support children to share and, take turns and look after resources. Practitioners explain the reasons for their expectations clearly and this results in many children showing kindness to others.

Practitioners know children well and identify their strengths and areas for improvement successfully. They observe children regularly and make note of their achievements and interests. However, the setting's evaluation and use of this information to support children's learning and development are at an early stage. Practitioners keep parents well informed about the activities children are doing and the progress they are making through a communication app and termly progress summaries.

Environment: Good

Leaders prioritise children's safety and ensure there are suitable policies and procedures in place to minimise any potential hazards. They conduct effective risk assessments, which are reviewed regularly. Leaders ensure that the environment and resources are safe, clean and well organised. The site is secure, and practitioners ensure external gates are closed promptly after children arrive. Visitors are required to show identification and sign in on arrival. The setting keeps a detailed register of children and practitioners to ensure they know who is on the premises. Leaders keep the premises well maintained. They ensure that the setting's safety equipment such as fire extinguishers are serviced on a regular basis and they conduct regular fire drills.

Leaders ensure that the environment is welcoming and inviting and that it provides a rich environment for play and exploration. The setting is self-contained within the school's grounds and provides appropriate space for the number of children who attend. There are suitable toilets and nappy changing facilities. Indoor and outdoor environments are used well to promote children's skill development and this enables children to choose where they play for most of the session. There is a suitable balance between ensuring safety for children and providing opportunities to challenge themselves and take risks. Practitioners have created a stimulating environment in the outside area, Overall, this provision supports children's learning and development well. However, there are few resources or experiences for children to explore and investigate the natural world. This limits their opportunities to observe and develop curiosity about the natural world and how to care for living things.

Leaders ensure that the furniture, equipment, and resources are of good quality and appropriate to children's stage of development. Resources are stored at a low level and easily accessible to children. The setting provides toys and play materials that promote diversity and cultural awareness suitably, including dolls, books and role play clothes. Practitioners model recycling to children through the use of recycled toys and materials within the environment.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting to ensure all children are happy and make good progress as they learn through play. They have created an inclusive and engaging environment, which ensures that children are nurtured and well cared for. Leaders develop a strong sense of teamwork within the setting and give effective support to practitioners including their well-being. They meet regularly with practitioners and provide clear communication resulting in the smooth running of the setting. Leaders are well organised and have a worthwhile range of policies which they share with parents and practitioners effectively. They comply with regulations and national minimum standards. The statement of purpose is clear and provides an accurate picture of the setting, allowing parents to make informed decisions around the suitability of the setting for their child.

Leaders implement safe and appropriate processes for recruitment and deployment of practitioners. A beneficial induction programme ensures new practitioners feel supported, they understand expectations and have strong knowledge of the setting's aims and ethos. Leaders ensure that practitioners have clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities well. This supports the work of the setting successfully. For example, individual practitioners have been allocated responsibility to develop a specific area of provision and this is having a positive impact on the learning environment. Leaders carry out appraisals and regular supervisions with practitioners, which clearly identify areas for improvement. However, on occasion, targets focus on the completion of tasks rather than developing children's learning and development.

Practitioners understand the setting's priorities and the improvements being made. For example, they describe how recent changes to planning have increased children's engagement in their play. All practitioners show a commitment to continued professional development and improving their practice. Leaders provide a helpful range of worthwhile professional learning opportunities for practitioners such as training linked to Curriculum for Wales. This is having a positive impact. For example, the setting now places a stronger emphasis on supporting children to lead their own play. Leaders ensure that practitioners share useful information from professional learning opportunities with each other. For example, a few practitioners shared key information gained from language and communication training. Because of this, most practitioners support children's language development well.

Leaders make beneficial use of practitioners and resources to support children's wellbeing and learning successfully. They regularly exceed the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners to ensure that children's needs are met well.

Resources are plentiful and of good quality. For example, well-resourced areas of provision support children's curiosity and engagement effectively.

The setting has a developing range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Leaders have fostered strong relationships with children's parents and carers. They gather useful information about children such as their likes and dislikes and how they can be supported within the setting. This provides practitioners with valuable information to help them meet children's needs effectively. The setting keeps parents well informed of their child's progress and the activities they are involved in through regular meetings and the setting's communication applications.

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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Publication date: 24/07/2024

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. 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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Date Published 24 July 2024