A report on

Cylch Meithrin Dolgellau

Dolgellau Family Centre
Drill Hall, Smithfield Street,
Dolgellau,
Gwynedd
LL40 1DE

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cylch Meithrin Dolgellau

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Dolgellau
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Gwenllian Lansdown Davies
Person in charge	Glesni Davenport, Keely Moncur, Sarah Edwards, Cara Parry-Williams and Niamh Gladstone
Number of places	48
Age range of children	0-4 years old
Number of 3- and 4-year-old children	38
Number of children who receive funding for early education	9
Opening days / times	08.00 – 17.00 Monday – Friday
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Welsh
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	23/09/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection	22/06/2019
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	02/06/2026

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)**	**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	**Adequate**

Non-compliance

The provider was informed that the setting does not comply with regulations. No notice was issued but these are identified as areas for improvement that should be given attention by the leaders.

Recommendations

R1 Develop further the understanding of all practitioners of the use of observations and assessment opportunities and use them to support children more effectively in their play and learning.

R2 Address the areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection.

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Most children have a strong voice in choosing activities and directing their play. They move freely around the areas and choose where and with whom to play. Children are confident when helping themselves to resources within their reach, for example when using dough resources to extend the activity further. This enables them to make simple choices and develop a sense of control over their experiences.

Nearly all children feel safe and happy, settling quickly and showing a sense of security. They have the confidence to ask for support or comfort from practitioners, when necessary, and benefit clearly from positive relationships. A minority of children are beginning to develop an understanding of their feelings, by using simple resources to name emotions and responding to situations in positive manner. For example, children develop social and emotional skills when helping others to understand the importance of waiting their turn before going for lunch.

Most children interact appropriately and suitably for their age and stage of development. A few use words and simple phrases, while others use gestures to support understanding. Children learn to share resources and begin to take turns, for example when working together to pour water or sharing first aid role-play equipment. Some children show enthusiasm when communicating with adults and their friends, and inviting practitioners to join in their play.

Children enjoy their play and learning and show enthusiasm when exploring all resources and activities. A few children are beginning to develop creative ideas and create a narrative, for example when using dinosaurs in the small world area. Children enjoy a suitable balance between structured periods and free play and choose to relax in quiet areas after busy periods of play.

Most children develop age-appropriate independence skills. They manage daily tasks appropriately, for example washing hands when necessary or persevering to put on coats and prepare to go outside to play. A few children take part in the daily arrangements, such as being the helper of the day, and support with simple tasks that support a sense of responsibility and confidence in personal development and life skills.

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

Most children, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their starting points. They develop a purposeful range of skills effectively during learning and play, particularly in their independent skills, which develop robustly.

Nearly all children develop sound physical skills. They are physically active and show increasing control in their play. When using different equipment, they cope well with physical challenges and demonstrate effective balance when using the obstacle course. Most

children's fine motor skills develop skilfully, for example when using tongs to pick up pasta and rice from one bowl to another.

A majority of children show an interest in books, handle them with respect and enjoy looking at them with an adult and independently. Their pre-reading skills develop effectively; for example, most recognise their names on labels and use them independently during registration and when looking for their table mat during snack time. Most children's oral skills develop very effectively and they have sound language skills and a wide vocabulary. For example, they are confident when discussing what type of food needs to be prepared in the kitchen. They respond confidently in Welsh and are enthusiastic when joining in with singing. During their play, most begin to develop their early writing skills effectively. They make marks purposefully with different media, such as paint, chalk and crayons.

A majority of children use mathematical language correctly in appropriate contexts. They have good numeracy skills and enjoy experimenting with a wide range of mathematical equipment. They count confidently when adding petals to the dough and stones to create a face.

A majority of children develop early digital skills effectively. They take advantage of the rich opportunities available to them. For example, they share a portable radio while role-playing. As a result, they familiarise themselves well and apply their early digital skills meaningfully.

Most children's personal, social and emotional skills are strong. They are completely independent when playing with their friends and treat the contributions of others with mature respect.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy by implementing consistent and robust arrangements. They have an appropriate understanding of policies and procedures; for example, they generally follow hygiene procedures when cleaning surfaces, changing nappies and reminding children to maintain personal hygiene. Practitioners are trained appropriately in childcare and safeguarding qualifications to the appropriate level and a suitable number have completed first aid and food hygiene training. Practitioners take prompt action to maintain practices by strengthening recording arrangements and ensuring that thorough information is shared appropriately. As a result, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements are not a cause for concern.

They complete medication, accident and incident records and registers of children appropriately, and there are different systems for recording staff registers through a digital app and paper records. However, there are no clear systems in place to record practitioners' attendance times to include times when practitioners leave the setting, to show clearly who is present at the setting and taking care of the children at all times. Practitioners work as a team to ensure constant supervision of children as they move between areas and in the outdoor area. They support children carefully when using climbing resources or taking part in challenging activities.

Practitioners interact positively with children and foster warm and supportive relationships. They show respect and kindness and model appropriate behaviour effectively and children respond well and begin to use similar approaches in their behaviour towards others. Practitioners also use praise and encouragement effectively to support positive behaviour, for example when praising children for sharing or taking turns. They communicate clearly and give children plenty of time and warning if there are changes to the daily routine, for example when moving from the outdoor area to the indoor area, or before tidying up times. Practitioners are beginning to use communication cards to promote children's understanding of the setting's expectations, for example a happy face card or simple symbols to show instructions.

Most practitioners know the children's needs well and use this information to support their development appropriately. Practitioners observe children regularly to inform plans and their next steps. They are also developing a method of sharing information about children's progress through a digital system and discussions with parents at the end of sessions. Practitioners are aware of children's additional learning needs (ALN) and use effective strategies to support them. A specific team of ALN practitioners works appropriately with leaders and external agencies to provide support to children and practitioners, when necessary, to ensure that all children develop and make progress.

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

Practitioners plan interesting learning experiences that encourage children's development appropriately. They are aware of the importance of letting children learn through play and provide beneficial opportunities for them to explore, experiment and solve problems. As a result, most children develop to become confident, independent learners who are very willing to try new experiences.

Practitioners model polished language continuously and use songs effectively to develop children's skills. They provide a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills and to make marks. Notebooks and pencils, felt pens and electronic tablets are available, along with patterns to copy in the sand pit. As a result, most children's early writing skills develop well.

Provision to develop physical skills is sound. Practitioners provide a range of purposeful resources that allow children to develop strong physical balancing skills. They provide beneficial opportunities for children to take appropriate risks, for example by providing authentic tools such as a screwdriver and nails in the construction area to make holes in cardboard.

Provision to develop children's numeracy skills is effective. For example, children are given beneficial opportunities to count how many pieces of pasta are on a string and how many spoonfuls of sand are needed to fill a cake tin.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to immerse themselves in their play and develop their creative skills successfully. Children are given opportunities to role-play and use their imagination and enthusiasm to re-live real-life experiences, for example by playing purposefully and emulating a doctor treating a patient. Practitioners ensure freedom

and choice for children to access equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas, which enables them to have long periods of uninterrupted play. This appealing provision gives each child an opportunity to play and concentrate for extended periods. Practitioners maintain a warm, supportive relationship with children. In the best practice, they participate in joint play, listen attentively and interact successfully at the child's level.

Practitioners plan suitable experiences that contribute positively to children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. They organise beneficial visits to the local community, such as visits to the library and homes for the elderly, which support children to develop a better understanding of their environment. Practitioners ensure beneficial opportunities to learn about events in other cultures.

Practitioners develop their ability to record children's observations and achievements. On the whole, they gather information about children's interests and what they do appropriately. However, practitioners' observations do not always focus on the development of individual children in sufficient detail. As a result, their assessments are not robust enough to identify the next step in learning, nor effective enough to be of practical use when planning. Practitioners engage effectively with parents and carers by sharing pictures and a record of the child's achievements through digital media.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure the safety of the site by implementing robust and clear arrangements. Access to the setting is managed appropriately, for example through a bell system and locks on internal doors to prevent unauthorised access. Leaders set clear arrangements for recording visitors and organise regular drills to practise emergency procedures. They use a wide range of risk assessments to identify and manage hazards and these are updated regularly to include specific assessments. Practitioners are part of creating the assessments and are aware of actions to support children. They use a daily system of checking areas to maintain high standards of cleanliness and safety. Practitioners also support children to take appropriate risks for their ages and stages of development and adapt and change resources within provision, depending on the children's needs.

Leaders provide a welcoming, warm and safe environment that benefits from natural light and a suitable temperature. They organise the internal environment effectively to create different spaces, including reading, construction and creative corners. There is a specific space available in each room that offers suitable opportunities for children to relax or explore a sensory area full of different lights, materials and toys. Leaders ensure that provision supports children to engage appropriately within the environment and to make simple choices about their play. The outdoor areas are secure and provide opportunities to develop physical skills, for example balancing, climbing and building.

Leaders provide a suitable variety of resources that support children's learning and play. Resources are varied and are organised deliberately to encourage their independence and curiosity. Practitioners ensure that natural materials, recycled resources and real-life resources support children's imaginative play. Displays of children's work and activities are visible, contributing to a sense of belonging and sharing each child's successes.

Leadership and management: Adequate

The leader has high expectations and plays an active role in the setting, promoting a positive, inclusive and hard-working ethos. Following a period of change and redistributing responsibilities, leaders have focused on creating a homely environment for the children and practitioners to support their well-being and development. They have a sound understanding of their responsibilities to promote the Welsh language. They know the setting well and have a suitable understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. However, they do not always consider the views of stakeholders when creating plans for continuous improvement.

There is a clear statement of purpose in place which provides an accurate picture of the setting, enabling parents and carers to make informed decisions. However, they do not always inform Care Inspectorate Wales of any incidents and changes to the details set out in the regulations in a timely manner, but appropriate records were seen during the inspection. This is an area for improvement and we expect the setting to make improvements.

Leaders demonstrate a continuous commitment to improving provision to develop children's skills. As a result, their regular practices and positive attitudes create a supportive environment that provides beneficial experiences for children.

Leaders check the suitability of practitioners, ensuring that they have the appropriate skills, experience and qualification to fulfil their roles. Leaders implement suitable arrangements for improvement planning and identify relevant priorities to improve provision. They ensure that practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities clearly. However, although there is a culture of daily, informal communication, not all practitioners have regular one-to-one supervision and this is an area for improvement. This limits their ability to reflect systematically on the quality of their practices and raise issues relating to professional development, and we expect the setting to make improvements.

Practitioners work effectively with the local authority's advisory teachers and act on the useful advice of officers from support organisations. This contributes significantly to the development of provision. Leaders work closely with the authority's additional learning needs services to ensure that they support children effectively. They are very open to accepting all advice and are willing to adapt provision as a result of the input of experts. Leaders forge a supportive relationship with parents and carers. They communicate with them regularly and include them effectively in children's learning experiences.

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

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

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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
We found outcomes for children require improvement as the leaders at the service did not fulfil their regulatory responsibilities in relation to notifying CIW of changes and significant events at the setting.	02/06/26
Children may be at risk if the provider does not formally monitor and review staff performance on a regular basis. This could potentially impact the standard of service delivery and the care children receive.	02/06/26

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

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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