Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

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

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Cynwyd Sant

Ysgol Cynwyd Sant
Pen-Yr-Ysgol
Maesteg
CF34 9YE

Date of inspection: May 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cylch Meithrin Cynwyd Sant

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Cynwyd Sant
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Not applicable
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Clare Meredith and Andrew Norbury
Person in charge	Clare Meredith
Number of places	24
Age range of children	2 – 5 years old
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	5
Number of children who receive funding for early education	5
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday from 8:50 to 15:00.
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Welsh
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	Yes. 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, or who may use the service, in terms of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	This is the first inspection under this registration.
Date of previous Estyn inspection	January 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03/05/2022
Additional information	

Non-compliance

No issues of non-compliance were identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Take advantage of opportunities to strengthen children's skills during snack time

R2 Expand opportunities to develop children's Welsh skills more systematically

What happens next

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

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to children's independence and the use of teaching strategies that consider their interests, to be disseminated on their websites.

Main findings

Wellbeing:

Nearly all children are extremely happy in their learning and play environment. They are exceptionally enthusiastic and delight in the wide range of activities that are available to them. All settle as soon as they arrive and feel extremely safe in their environment. They are confident about sharing their feelings by choosing whether they are happy or sad during self-registration and explain why successfully. They show a fondness for their practitioners, for example by seeking comfort when they fall and by embracing them during quiet times, such as story time in the quiet corner.

Nearly all children interact exceptionally well with their peers and practitioners. Most develop a very positive relationship with other children. They take turns to use the slide and share balance bikes completely naturally.

Nearly all children move excitedly from one activity to another and choose activities that stimulate them. They are highly motivated when searching for insects under pieces of wood and counting how many worms and other insects are hiding. A majority of children contribute their ideas enthusiastically about what they would like to do. They communicate their wishes and preferences confidently, for example when expressing to practitioners that they would like more milk during snack time and when asking to play with the bells and musical instruments. Nearly all children have exceptionally good listening skills, for example by following rules when congregating very carefully and waiting their turn to cook their fruit kebab around the fire in the outdoor area.

Nearly all children concentrate for an appropriate amount of time according to their stage of development. They role-play very enthusiastically and interact effectively with practitioners when discussing the names of fruit and vegetables in the shop. Nearly all children interact exceptionally well with other children and share and take turns maturely. While playing in the mud kitchen and café area, they share resources independently when making food, such as potato and carrot soup with ‘real’ food. They share resources and work together sensibly to make highly imaginative constructions. Most develop resilience exceptionally well during their activities. An excellent example of this is the careful co-operation when creating their own obstacle course. Most encourage and support each other naturally by showing that they need to stop at the red traffic lights while playing on the bicycles in the outdoor area. Nearly all children take pride when being praised and complimented by practitioners.

Nearly all children develop independent skills highly effectively. They guide their play maturely and choose their activities and complete their role-play and problem-solving tasks successfully. An effective example of this is watering flowers by helping themselves to water from the taps. Most meet their personal needs very well by putting on their own shoes, coats and painting aprons and putting their belongings on their personal pegs. Nearly all children undertake day-to-day tasks completely independently. They do this by washing their hands, pouring their own milk and water and choosing food during snack time. Nearly all treat each other politely and with respect and respond positively to practitioners, for example by saying thank you for their fruit and drink. Nearly all children develop particularly robust physical skills by

balancing confidently on the blocks and using balance bikes. They show very robust skills when selecting craft resources and hold a pencil and paint brush correctly.

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 there were not enough three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection, who do not receive funded education elsewhere, to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development:

There is a very close relationship between practitioners and children. Practitioners know the children exceptionally well and respect their personal interests, preferences and requirements. They use very effective strategies while interacting sensitively with children and encouraging them to do their best. They provide a wide range of rich opportunities for children to select their own resources and know when they are not ready to take part in activities. Practitioners meet children's individual needs highly successfully by planning tasks and activities that consider their interests and developmental needs in full. They provide frequent opportunities for children to make choices and solve problems and intervene when they feel that there is a good opportunity to expand the children's understanding or creativity. Practitioners communicate highly effectively and praise children by celebrating their efforts enthusiastically and sincerely. Practitioners ensure that there are regular opportunities for children to learn about other cultures, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Practitioners support children to develop their understanding and their emotions very well. They observe children as they arrive in the morning and offer them warmth and kindness as they respond to their feelings. Practitioners plan a wide range of valuable activities and experiences to ensure that all children develop as well-rounded individuals. A strong element of the setting is the way in which practitioners provide exceptionally good opportunities to develop children's independence skills during activities. They do this by considering resources carefully, such as the availability of paint for children to fill the pots themselves. They also ensure that they model daily routines for children to develop their ability to work independently. However, practitioners do not always take advantage of every opportunity to extend children's skills during snack time. Practitioners are completely consistent and fair when managing behaviour and model positive behaviour very well. They ensure, for example, that children understand the need to be careful when going down the slide and praise them for following instructions well.

Practitioners have a sound understanding of how to meet children's needs. They undertake relevant training to develop their awareness of the Additional Learning Needs Act appropriately. They work very effectively with parents and carers to develop and support children and give attention to their developmental, emotional and social needs.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Practitioners follow very rigorous procedures and use their knowledge of relevant training successfully to ensure the children's health and safety. They promote healthy eating and drinking successfully by providing healthy and nutritious snacks. They implement effective cleaning systems and daily checks. Practitioners use risk assessments efficiently to identify risks in all areas while acknowledging the advantages of taking risks during daily activities. Practitioners keep detailed records of incidents and accidents and ensure that parents and practitioners sign them to show that they are aware of what has happened.

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

Practitioners have high expectations for all children and identify their learning needs exceptionally well. The way in which practitioners engage children's interest and encourage them to learn by considering their individual interests and needs is an exceptional feature of teaching. This is done by observing children playing and by joining in at appropriate times to extend children's knowledge, understanding and skills skilfully. Practitioners take excellent advantage of every opportunity to develop children's independence and to encourage perseverance when they face obstacles in their play. Another strong element of teaching is when practitioners want children to develop specific skills; they begin the activity themselves and then wait for children to show an interest and join in with the activity.

Practitioners use their understanding of children's individual needs and their strong understanding of child development excellently to provide learning experiences of a high standard. They work together closely to plan excellent learning experiences. This ensures an effective balance between activities that develop children's knowledge and understanding progressively and rich opportunities for children to experiment and pursue their own paths in their learning. For example, when they hear birds singing in the outdoor area, children go to get the binoculars from the nature area to look for birds. The practitioner notices this and develops the activities for children to learn more about the birds and help them to put food out for them in order to maintain their interest. This also has a positive effect on children's spiritual and moral development as they observe the world around them and learn how to respect it.

Another particularly good feature is the way in which practitioners provide stimulating learning areas both indoors and outdoors to spark children's curiosity and enable them to be completely independent in their play. These areas are enriched valuably by a wide range of resources to engage children's interest. This also contributes very well towards developing children's social skills. In the home area, for example, practitioners trust children to use real equipment, such as a ceramic teapot and cups. They play alongside the children and model how to use the equipment correctly. As a result, children emulate this themselves by treating the resources and their peers with genuine respect. Provision also makes a significant contribution to a wide range of skills, including children's numeracy and physical skills as they use tongs to pick up food from the spinning plate in the middle of the table and when using

mathematical vocabulary such as ‘full’ and ‘empty’ when pouring tea from the teapot for their friends.

The setting has simple and effective arrangements for observing and assessing children’s progress. Practitioners use information that derives from these procedures skilfully to plan the next steps in learning. This is done holistically, in the main, with practitioners developing different skills within the same activity. A very effective example of this is when observing children reading a book about physical movements; a practitioner joins in to show them how to follow the instructions in the book. They introduce new vocabulary, such as ‘ymestyn’ (stretch), and encourage them to emulate the movements to improve their physical skills.

Practitioners model language soundly. They introduce new vocabulary to children purposefully and try to encourage them to answer simple questions in Welsh. Practitioners develop the language purposefully during activities, for example by introducing new words when observing insects that live under the tree trunk. However, there is not always a sufficient focus on expanding and developing all children’s Welsh language skills systematically.

Practitioners take advantage of regular opportunities to develop children’s cultural understanding, for example by using different stories to consider how people live in parts of the world in comparison to Wales. There are suitable opportunities to promote children’s awareness of Welsh traditions and culture, for example by celebrating the centenary of the Urdd and Shwmae Su’mae Day.

Environment:

Leaders ensure a welcoming, safe and rich environment that stimulates children’s play and learning highly successfully. They make excellent use of colourful and attractive displays and value and celebrate children’s work by displaying it. The learning and play areas ignite pupils’ imagination exceptionally well and enable them to take risks, explore, discover and solve problems both indoors and outdoors. The areas provide exceptionally good opportunities for children to be active and develop a wide range of skills; for example, by jumping from one numbered wooden block to another, children develop their physical and numeracy skills effectively. The outdoor areas are extremely interesting and provide a rich choice of multisensory activities that motivate children to investigate and discover. Leaders provide a herb and flower garden that provides purposeful opportunities for children to explore nature and use magnifying glasses, natural resources and flash cards that show the names of insects. Resources that are at the children’s level are labelled clearly, which provides very good opportunities for children to choose resources independently.

The environment supports children’s social development effectively. Leaders ensure that children’s privacy is respected successfully during toilet breaks. There is also skilled provision for quiet time in the indoor and outdoor areas.

Resources of a high standard are provided to give children engaging opportunities to develop an understand of people in the wider community, for example dolls, puppets and stories based on life in Africa and resources that teach children about the Chinese New Year. Leaders also use resources appropriately to develop children’s understanding of Wales. There are opportunities for children to copy the Welsh flag

in the creative corner, for example by using paint, crayons, paper, scissors and glue independently.

Leaders use resources purposefully to promote children's creativity. Costumes, masks and pieces of multisensory materials are used to stimulate children to emulate insects. Welsh music and dramatic music are provided to extend learning and play by dancing and emulating the movements of familiar insects.

Leadership and management:

Leaders have high expectations for themselves and children. They have a very strong vision based on creating a homely and stimulating environment for children where they are given extremely rich opportunities to develop their curiosity and independence and take risks in their play. They share this vision successfully with parents, students and external agencies that support the setting. Leaders work together excellently as a team to provide care and support of a high standard. They also provide beneficial guidance and support to students who are training at the setting, with a strong focus on developing their teaching skills and a high standard of care. This has a positive effect on developing children's skills.

Leaders manage practitioners conscientiously through their supervision and evaluation procedures. They identify staff's strengths effectively and what they need to develop professionally. Supervision arrangements ensure that all practitioners are accountable for the standard of provision and children's outcomes, in addition to providing beneficial opportunities for them to develop professionally. Leaders make beneficial use of relevant training to develop practitioners' skills, for example by raising their awareness of the new Additional Learning Needs Act. Leaders also take individual ownership of their own professional development by researching good practice, such as schemas on child development to understand how to move children forward in their learning. This has an exceptionally good effect on their understanding of child development and how to develop their skills and ensure that children become confident and independent learners in their play.

Leaders have simple and effective arrangements to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They make valuable use of feedback from the local education authority's advisory teacher and parents as part of these arrangements. At the heart of these procedures is the use of continuous observations to identify what works well and how they can adapt and improve provision for children. For example, they respond to observing children enjoying the construction equipment by purchasing specific new resources to enrich provision and develop their skills and ability to solve problems by persevering.

Leaders make beneficial use of any grants to improve experiences for children. They have recently invested extensively in new resources both indoors and in the outdoor area, which leads to providing more authentic experiences for children to investigate and experiment. This expenditure has had a very positive effect on developing children's wellbeing and skills.

The setting has an excellent partnership with parents. During the Covid-19 pandemic, one leader provided learning sessions for children over social media. This gave parents ideas about how to help their children, in addition to ensuring that children

heard stories through the medium of Welsh. The setting uses social media effectively to inform parents about its service and to provide guidance, where necessary. There is a close partnership between the setting and the school on the same site. Visits by the school's staff mean that children transfer smoothly when they start at 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).

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

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