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Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Abercynon

Y Gorlan
Parkview
Abercynon
CF35 4TP

Date of inspection: March 2025 by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Cylch Meithrin Abercynon

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Abercynon
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Claire Jones
Person in charge	Dominie Prosser
Number of places	24
Age range of children	2-4
Number of 3 and 4-year-old children	10
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	09.00 – 16.00 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	This is the first inspection since re-registration.
Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first inspection.
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	25/03/2025

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	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Ensure regular opportunities for children to develop their skills constructively over time, particularly their numeracy and digital skills

R2. Refine and strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes

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 are happy and enjoy the company of their friends and practitioners when socialising together. They make choices confidently and enjoy the freedom to move around the learning areas. For example, they make free choices about whether they want to play indoors or in the outdoor area. Nearly all children join groups of friends by choice and help themselves to resources skilfully. For example, they enjoy experimenting with dough, building a train track or riding bicycles and cars. They are comfortable asking for help when putting on a painting apron or moving containers to water plants.

Nearly all children settle quickly and put their coats and bags on their pegs on arrival before joining the registration and singing session. They cope well and feel safe and at home. For example, they enjoy the closeness of practitioners and friends when looking at an insect book outdoors. They have the confidence to call the practitioners' names as necessary and show that they have a sense of belonging. Many children are familiar with the daily routines and know what happens next. For example, they are aware of the toothbrushing and snack time arrangements. They enjoy developing their understanding of their identity. For example, while role-playing, they discuss their families and talk happily.

Many children interact well and develop sound social skills, by enjoying the company of friends and learning to take turns. For example, during snack time, children enjoy eating with their friends around the table. They observe each other as they learn to use a knife to butter toast and pour milk into their cups. They smile and laugh as they complete their tasks and are proud of their friends' success. Many children support each other effectively. For example, the oldest children show the youngest children how to fill moulds to make shapes in the sand. Nearly all children develop warm relationships with practitioners and interact well with visitors, for example when showing their colourful artwork.

Many children are enthusiastic and persevere purposefully while learning. For example, they show an interest when experimenting with colourful rice and concentrate for periods to fill containers with resources, such as spoons, rocks and small funnels. Many children experiment confidently in their environment and enjoy mastering equipment such as the obstacle course and, when they succeed, are keen to try again. They enjoy opportunities to experiment when creating an area for minibeasts and talk excitedly when choosing bark, stones and wood.

Most children develop good independent skills, for example when going to the toilet, washing and drying their hands without support, brushing their teeth and during self-registration. They take pride in their achievements, such as using the water fountain independently and using real plates during snack time.

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

Many children make good progress from their starting points and develop a range of skills effectively while playing and learning. Children are happy when settling into the setting and develop their personal, social and emotional skills well. Through valuable support from practitioners, nearly all children show an interest in their learning while interacting naturally both indoors and outdoors. Children immerse themselves fully in the stimulating environment. They enjoy learning through beneficial experiences, for example when sharing and taking turns making dough with the support of a practitioner.

Many children listen attentively to instructions and, as a result, come to know the setting's arrangements quickly. Most understand simple instructions from practitioners and respond with increasing confidence, either through the medium of Welsh or through gestures and actions. Children enjoy joining in with singing sessions without exception and use relevant movements to accompany the words. They also enjoy singing during free play sessions. For example, when they hear the sound of a train in the distance, they are keen to demonstrate suitable movements while singing *'Mae Tomos y trên yn mynd i lawr y trac'.*

Most children develop their Welsh language skills successfully during their time at the setting. For example, when discussing breakfast options in the role-play area, they give their opinion on the benefits of eating vegetables. This contributes purposefully to the children's progress in their Welsh communication skills.

Many children develop reading skills appropriately and show an interest in books and treat them with respect. They choose books independently and share stories with adults and peers. A majority of children enjoy making marks and develop their ability to use suitable writing implements to create meaning. For example, when playing in the outdoor area, they use chalk to draw symbols on the floor to represent letters and the shape of a heart, then discuss their meaning with a practitioner.

A majority of children develop appropriate numeracy skills and use mathematical language correctly in line with their stage of development. For example, they count how many fruit they have chosen and place them carefully on the spoon during snack time. They use their numeracy skills beneficially when making patterns with craft resources and zigzag scissors in the creative area. Many children work together appropriately in numeracy activities and demonstrate perseverance when problem-solving. However, a minority of children do not develop their numeracy skills in a rich range of learning experiences regularly enough.

A majority of children show an interest in digital resources, for example when pressing talking buttons in the learning areas to hear a variety of songs. However, provision does not support children to use a suitable variety of digital devices as a natural part of their learning. In general, the digital skills of a minority of children are not developed securely enough.

Most children develop their physical skills naturally in the outdoor areas. They use physical resources such as trikes confidently and a few control them independently. A few children challenge themselves by using the climbing equipment inventively. They help each other to balance and move along an obstacle course made of large wooden blocks successfully.

Most children show natural creativity. For example, they create structures that represent notable buildings in the block play area with the help of photographs. They explore and experiment with different paint colours effectively and create imaginative pictures by using a variety of craft equipment.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe and prioritise their health and safety successfully. They implement robust policies and procedures effectively. Practitioners understand their responsibility to safeguard children and have completed appropriately child safeguarding training, in addition to following clear policies and procedures. They have attended appropriate first aid training and keep accurate records of accidents and incidents. They ensure that robust procedures are followed during snack times and encourage children to wash their hands regularly. Practitioners understand their responsibility to protect children with allergies and have clear procedures for administering medication. They ensure complete dignity and privacy when following the nappy changing policy and record these practices on a daily basis. They understand their responsibilities to support children with additional learning needs (ALN) and have effective networks and purposeful procedures to support them. Practitioners have a thorough and organised registration system and have consent records in place. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners know the children very well and treat them with care and respect. They have a kind and warm relationship with the children and model natural and caring interactions consistently. They are passionate about their work and work together successfully to reinforce kind values. For example, they encourage children to share and take turns by promoting playing in small groups, which provides suitable time for each child. Practitioners observe, wait and listen thoughtfully which creates a sense of belonging. They are on hand to offer support, when necessary, such as support to put on an apron or use scissors. They praise the children and encourage them to try activities such as making dough or climbing. They promote the Welsh language continuously by talking, singing regularly and presenting language patterns extremely effectively.

Practitioners have a clear understanding of the children's individual needs and wishes. They are very willing to support them and provide activities and play experiences to encourage them to solve problems themselves. For example, they remind children of the resources they have around the setting and encourage them to experiment, for example when using twigs in the dough to make a pattern. Practitioners work continuously to develop a variety of experiences to encourage children to learn by doing. For example, they teach the children to understand their own feelings during self-registration.
Practitioners act as key workers for a group of children. They record observations of their progress and successes in the 'Taith Dysgu' (Learning Journey) books to plan for the next steps.

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

Practitioners work together purposefully to plan interesting and creative learning experiences that engage and hold children's interest effectively. Practitioners have a sound understanding of Curriculum for Wales, which contributes appropriately to their understanding of how a child makes progress in their skills in play activities and tasks. Practitioners gather valuable information about the children, for example about their learning motivations and interests, which provides a useful overview of each child. This supports them to nurture children's well-being and provide activities that meet their learning needs successfully.

One of the notable qualities of teaching is the way in which practitioners interact regularly with the children and promote the use of the Welsh language successfully. Through practitioners' skilful immersion methods, for example modelling the language and singing songs continuously, children hear vocabulary and language patterns regularly. This, in turn, gives children the confidence to talk and develop their communication skills with increasing confidence. Valuable opportunities are provided for children to enjoy a variety of books, for example when reading in the wigwam in the outdoor area. Practitioners support children to develop their writing skills appropriately, for example by using chalk to form letters on the playground.

Practitioners have a strong working relationship with the children and take advantage of every opportunity to promote their curiosity and imagination effectively. Practitioners develop children's numeracy skills appropriately, for example when matching the number on bicycles with the relevant parking stations. Children develop their digital skills appropriately in relevant activities, such as when they use devices to support their learning. On the whole, practitioners do not provide enough purposeful and regular opportunities for children to develop their numeracy and digital skills constructively over time. This slows children's progress as they use and apply their skills in a range of learning experiences.

Practitioners provide a stimulating learning environment that encourages children to play and learn under the guidance of an adult and with increasing independence. They conduct beneficial observations of the children and delay purposefully before intervening to support them in moving learning forward. Practitioners question children effectively and discuss their responses skilfully. This extends children's knowledge and deepens their understanding of different learning experiences, for example when discussing that milk, cheese and yoghurt are products that come from cow's milk. The information that derives from these observations and discussions is placed on the 'Camau Nesaf' ('Next Steps') mural as a means for practitioners to support children to make continuous progress. The children's 'Taith Dysgu' ('Learning Journey') is a valuable individual record of their achievements and development in the skills from their starting points.

Through effective planning, practitioners develop children's cultural skills successfully, for example when tasting different foods from Wales and beyond. They make valuable use of the local area, such as visiting the local park, to develop children's appreciation of their community. Practitioners deliver activities that develop children's spiritual skills effectively and discuss aspects such as happiness and kindness as a natural part of their work.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure a safe and clean environment and they have robust measures in place to ensure that access to the school site is through the setting's robust processes. Leaders ensure that the main outdoor gate is locked and managed carefully. They have clear procedures which ensure that visitors sign in promptly and leaders keep all records relating to the service secure. The setting's maintenance records are kept up-to-date and leaders ensure that fire drills are conducted regularly. They ensure that environmental protection equipment is serviced regularly. They conduct effective risk assessments and review them regularly. Leaders keep a register of children and practitioners carefully and ensure that the ratio of practitioners to children is appropriate. They provide a specific area which displays information about the practitioners, policies and safeguarding procedures.

Leaders provide a good quality environment which is warm and welcoming. They ensure that there are suitable toilets and private and purposeful nappy changing facilities. They use the setting and the site's facilities effectively and allow children to play safely in all areas of the provision, in line with their wishes. In the main room, leaders provide an open environment where small furniture and units of resources promote children's independence successfully. They also ensure an enclosed and safe environment outside, which provides exciting opportunities for children. For example, there are shaded areas, hard surfaces and artificial grass which provide challenges and beneficial opportunities for children to take risks and nurture physical skills such as climbing and balancing.
Practitioners ensure a good balance between promoting children's safety and supporting them to take risks.

Leaders provide a variety of resources of a high standard for children that are suitable for their stage of development. They set out resources accessibly so that children are able to choose and pursue their interests. Leaders ensure that children are given continuous opportunities to experiences loose resources and real equipment. In the role-play area, there are resources such as real crockery and vegetables for children to play with. In the outdoor area, they provide physical challenges such as an obstacle course and equipment for children to experiment with water. Practitioners encourage children's personal and social development effectively by providing them with experiences to learn about their community, diversity and the multicultural world. For example, they have a variety of purposeful resources such as dolls, books, family photographs and well-known sites nearby to develop children's awareness of their local community. Visits to places such as the local community centre promote children's awareness of their community successfully.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a robust vision for providing education and care for children through the medium of Welsh. They demand the best for the children in delivering beneficial learning experiences for them. Leaders work effectively with the dedicated practitioners and they have high expectations and robust organisation in planning the inclusive provision. Leaders ensure that the statement of purpose outlines the current procedures effectively. They manage funding carefully and expenditure is prioritised sensibly to provide children with well-being and learning provision of a high standard. Grants and other financial contributions are used prudently, for example by continuing to invest in the learning environment.

Leaders have produced valuable policies and procedures which are implemented effectively. They follow safe recruitment policies and practitioners have appropriate qualifications and valuable experience in nurturing children's well-being and supporting their learning. The hard-working and enthusiastic team of practitioners are proud to be valued members of the workforce and are passionate about providing a homely environment for the children. There is a broad professional learning offer and practitioners are given regular opportunities to attend a variety of beneficial training which focuses on aspects such as ALN and the pedagogy of children's language acquisition. This has a positive effect on practitioners' knowledge and understanding in improving provision and meeting children's learning needs. Through regular co-operation between practitioners, parents and trustees, systems are implemented effectively to prepare children for the next steps in their learning. Leaders place a beneficial emphasis on ensuring that provision offers high-quality opportunities for children through the medium of Welsh.

Leaders use a relevant range of activities when evaluating provision, which include discussions with practitioners and suggestions from parents. Leaders and practitioners know what they do well and what needs to be improved. They take advantage of support from local authority officers beneficially to develop provision further. Evaluations are discussed by practitioners and recorded appropriately in a relevant improvement plan. This is a consistent guide for them to act on priorities, for example in trying to develop children's awareness of diversity in society. On the whole, the process of monitoring progress against priorities is suitable and this information has an appropriate influence on provision. However, self-evaluation processes do not focus successfully enough on the effect of action on children's learning, particularly the progress they achieve in their skills.

Practitioners work well with partnerships, for example when children attend important events at the primary school which is located on the same site. This facilitates the transition process and nurtures children's well-being and learning beneficially.
Practitioners arrange for children to go on trips around the local area to expand their learning experiences more widely, such as when visiting the community garden.
Practitioners work in a close-knit partnership with parents and share useful information with them through a useful newsletter and a digital app. Practitioners hold valuable sessions with parents to share information about experiences, well-being and progress in children's learning.

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.

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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