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

Canolfan Deulu y Bala

Hen Ysgol Beuno Sant
Heol y Castell
Bala
Gwynedd
LL23 7UU

Date of inspection: April 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

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About Canolfan Deulu y Bala

Name of setting	Canolfan Deulu y Bala
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Canolfan Deulu y Bala
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Stacy Galdo
Person in charge	Lisa Jones Michelle Gregory Angharad Jones Louisa Phillips
Number of places	100
Age range of children	0 – 4 years old
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	10
Number of children funded for early education	8
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 07:30 – 18:00
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Welsh
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service is working towards providing the Welsh Language 'Active Offer' and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	This is the first post-registration inspection.
Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first inspection.
Date(s) of this/these inspection visit(s)	23/04/2024

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Summary

Theme	Rating
Well-being	**Excellent**
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	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

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Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Extend opportunities for the children to develop their digital skills

What happens next

The setting will produce an action plan showing how it will implement the recommendations.

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to sustainable and effective partnerships for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Children demonstrate interest and wonder in discovery. They have a strong voice which has a direct impact on the day to day life of the setting. For example, children explore the outdoor area to find more resources to use as a container to collect and carry water. They make mature choices and decisions about what affects them. For example, they choose whether they want to play inside or outside, and a free flow is promoted at all times. Children express themselves exceptionally well, for example when explaining that a caterpillar creates a cocoon before turning into a butterfly. Children feel valued and they know that the practitioners will always listen to their ideas and opinions. As a result, children engage regularly in high-quality and purposeful interactions.

Nearly all children are happy and have settled extremely well. They cope exceptionally well when separated from their parents, and when their activities change. Children have warm and close relationships with each other and with practitioners. Children play alongside each other very maturely, contributing naturally to stimulating and imaginative discussions. For example, they give practitioners instructions by following a recipe for dough and discuss taking turns when using a spade to fill the trailer with sand. Nearly all children listen and follow instructions extremely well, for example they understand the importance of taking turns and helping to tidy up. Nearly all of them demonstrate excellent manners and express their gratitude to adults with minimal encouragement.

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Nearly all children are active and participate fully and prominently in their play and learning, concentrating for extended periods. They show purpose and curiosity when taking part in a variety of activities. They solve problems when building a tower while others explore heavy and light materials using the scales. They benefit from some structured practices as well as the freedom to move around and choose their own activities both indoors and outdoors. Nearly all children are full of enthusiasm to initiate their own play and influence their tasks and activities. For example, they choose to complete tasks based on developing number concepts before moving on to enjoy quiet time in the reading corner. They follow their personal choices successfully.

Nearly all children are developing increasing independence and self-help skills. For example, most of the younger children help to tidy up and attempt to feed themselves. Older children wash their hands, use the toilet facilities and choose when to have a quiet time and relax independently. Children choose whether they wish to help with things such as preparing for snack time and can serve their own meals. Most of them use cutlery appropriately. All children feel confident to approach practitioners for support when they feel that they require help from an adult.

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

Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points. Most children express their feelings and emotions appropriately. They go to sit on the mat for registration and demonstrate very good concentration skills when discussing quiet hands rules. Nearly all children use simple sign language when singing at the beginning of the session.

Most children use appropriate language when recalling stories. For example, they enjoy chatting about how a caterpillar develops using suitable vocabulary confidently. Most children use Welsh words for numbers and colours. Some of them express themselves more extensively using simple Welsh and ask appropriate questions confidently.

Nearly all children show an interest in books and follow stories and respond maturely. For example, they join in using appropriate gestures and creating shapes with their bodies, demonstrating wonderful creativity when flying around the environment like a butterfly.

Nearly all children experiment with mark-making using various objects. For example, they impersonate a practitioner by marking the paper with a pencil to make observations about the other children.

Nearly all children develop their co-ordination skills appropriately using large play equipment with good control. For example, they use a range of milk crates and large planks of wood to create an obstacle course. They are starting to use small tools with good control.

Most children choose and use appropriate mathematical equipment to solve practical problems. Nearly all children use mathematical language in appropriate contexts. For

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example, they demonstrate a good understanding of size and the concept of big and small when asking about fruit during snack time. Nearly all children count how many pieces of fruit they put on a wooden skewer to make a tasty fruit kebab.

Nearly all children make decisions regarding what they would like to play with. They concentrate on tasks for extended periods and experiment and demonstrate perseverance. A minority of children are developing appropriate digital skills. For example, they control simple electronic cars and use a digital camera to take pictures while playing.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners understand and implement policies consistently, promoting healthy lifestyles and children's personal safety. They are proactive when managing any risks and follow effective processes to keep children safe. For example, they ensure children can access their water bottles at all times and that they get dressed independently when preparing to play outside. Practitioners understand what actions to take should they have any safeguarding concerns. They work well as a team to ensure children's safety. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners respect children's feelings and ideas. For example, they ask them if they need help to wash their hands and children are comfortable and familiar with the routine.

Practitioners have a kind and caring relationship with the children. They speak to them respectfully, showing interest and enjoyment. They manage any sign of potential conflict carefully and quickly. Practitioners model language, extending children's vocabulary purposefully. For example, they ask children about parts of a flower which are used when playing in the water area. They reinforce prior learning effectively, for example when reminding children of what they had discovered about different animals in a story.

Practitioners implement positive behaviour strategies effectively. They praise children consistently when they complete specific tasks and take on responsibilities. They appreciate children's views and show warmth and kindness towards them. They are sensitive to children's needs and maximise opportunities to develop their vocabulary as they play. Practitioners use resources to bring a story alive expanding the children's imagination successfully.

Practitioners know the children well and have a thorough understanding of their needs and stage of development. They respond to children's individual needs promptly. Practitioners consider children's ideas and respond to their interests and curiosity, adding further activities and resources to enrich learning experiences.

Practitioners are committed to providing a range of play and learning activities and opportunities. For example, they encourage children's creativity by placing natural and real world resources in their role-play home corner. Practitioners are fully aware of the development of individual children and provide activities which are appropriate for individual ages and stages of development. They have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities to support children with additional learning needs. For

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example, they review children's individual plans regularly and update their learning journey records. They take effective action in response to advice from different agencies to support the needs of individual children.

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

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. They plan the provision carefully to spark the children's interest. For example, they plan opportunities for children to go out and collect flowers and foliage, developing their interest in the world around them. By providing extended periods of uninterrupted play, they give children freedom to experiment and immerse themselves fully in their play. Practitioners intervene sensibly to support children's independent learning. They promote children's early literacy skills successfully by encouraging them to take an interest in books, discussing what happens in a story and enjoying the pictures. Practitioners question children effectively to expand their learning and feed language consistently during the sessions. For example, during story time they use movements and adapt their voices when portraying characters, encouraging children to join in.

Practitioners encourage children to develop their numeracy skills effectively, for example when counting how many cups of flour are needed to make dough. They encourage children to match numbers from one to five and to park the bikes in the spaces with the number that corresponds to the number on the bike. They join in a jumping game, encouraging children to count correctly when jumping from square to square. They run a useful movement session to encourage children to develop their physical skills. This increases children's awareness of balance and how to control their bodies successfully. Practitioners promote children's understanding of Welsh culture effectively. For example, they hold an Eisteddfod to celebrate St David's Day. They are beginning to plan opportunities to develop children’s digital skills. However, the limited resources that are available do not enable children to develop their digital skills independently.

Practitioners promote children's diversity and rights successfully. For example, they use a variety of books from all over the world and from different cultures as a basis for discussion with the children. They plan a range of activities to enable children to learn more about different festivals and traditions, including Ramadan, St David's Day and the Chinese New Year.

Practitioners use information about the development of children's skills effectively to plan the next steps in their learning. Children's learning journey books are maintained throughout children's time at the setting, demonstrating appropriate progress from their starting points. They know the children very well and adapt the way they support each child skilfully. They have a wonderful relationship with the children and interact with them very effectively. They give children clear instructions and repeat them to reinforce what they want the children to do. For example, during snack time, they give clear instructions on how to use the equipment to cut fruit.

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Environment: Excellent

Leaders stimulate curiosity and encourage children to explore consistently. Nearly all resources reflect the natural environment and include authentic objects. For example, real kitchen equipment is provided in the role play area, such as a teapot. Practitioners promote the use of a variety of small equipment and block play very well, encouraging the development of valuable problem-solving skills amongst the children. The environment is full of high quality and multi-purpose resources and furniture. This enables children to make excellent progress in all areas of development. Nearly all resources are at a low level, which enables children to access them successfully and to be very independent in their play.

Leaders ensure that both the indoor and outdoor environments are safe. Thorough and comprehensive risk assessments are in place for all areas. Regular reviews are undertaken to ensure children's safety is considered consistently. Practitioners undertake thorough cleaning procedures and detailed checks to ensure the environment's health and safety requirements are met. They ensure that all required safety checks are completed and follow strict procedures in relation to visitors. The building is very clean, and practitioners follow effective and consistent hygiene procedures, such as sanitising tables and highchairs. They follow appropriate hygiene procedures when changing nappies and during mealtimes.

Leaders ensure that the spacious environment provides innovative and varied play and learning opportunities for all ages. This includes a sensory room, a sleeping room and a spacious green area to develop children's imagination and investigative skills fully. Older children can access the stimulating and creative outdoor area at all times. This enables them to feel valued and that they can play in their favourite areas. This maximises progress and enjoyment. The stimulating outdoor area is available to younger children, and it is used regularly throughout the day. Leaders provide wet weather gear for all children and practitioners to ensure they can use the outdoor area in all weather conditions.

Leaders provide a designated area for children to store their personal items. They display children's artwork attractively throughout the setting. Photographs of children, staff and families support a sense of belonging and promote children's self-esteem very successfully. Leaders have developed the environment extensively since the setting's establishment and it now includes an inviting meeting room which is used by community groups. Leaders use a variety of equipment and toys innovatively to promote children's cultural awareness, including their Welsh heritage. This promotes children's understanding of their local community and the wider world very successfully.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The leader is passionate about her work and takes pride in her staff, the children and their families. She succeeds in maintaining a strong family ethos, where all individuals are valued and feel confident to share their feelings, whether they are a child or a practitioner. She is very knowledgeable about the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and shares this knowledge with practitioners by leading by

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example. She is focussed on ensuring that the well-being of children and staff is given detailed attention and that the learning areas engage the children fully. Developing a sense of belonging is an important part of the setting's work.

Leaders set high expectations and support everyone to do their best. Leaders have detailed information about all children, and they ensure that they are challenged to reach their potential. For example, a WAW profile enables all practitioners to see immediately how to support all children during sessions. The management committee shares the leader's strong vision, and they collaborate extremely well to develop the provision. They have a good range of policies and procedures in place, which enable them to undertake and develop the setting's work very successfully.

Leaders have developed robust evaluation procedures that identify strengths and areas for development. These procedures include all stakeholders and lead to a development plan which includes specific steps to develop the provision. Leaders evaluate the impact of this work regularly, in order to identify its influence on children's experiences and progress. For example, they have identified the need to expand the provision to develop children's digital skills. This includes developing training opportunities for practitioners and providing more opportunities for children to develop their digital skills in the different areas.

Leaders make excellent use of practitioners and resources to maintain children's well-being standards. They develop the learning environment extremely effectively and, as a result, the children are making strong progress. They make very good use of a number of grants which enable them to create a natural and stimulating environment for the children. For example, they work with various partners to develop the outdoor area and transform parts of it.

Leaders have strong and successful links with a number of partnerships within the local community in the Bala area. For example, they have created a sensory area for children through the generosity of local businesses. They are very active in the community, supporting projects such as planting Daffodil bulbs in the town to celebrate local events. They also support the community by collecting litter and singing in a care home. They work closely with local schools and support pupils from the secondary school by providing work experience placements as part of courses to gain qualifications in childcare and development.

Leaders share children's achievements with parents skilfully through a closed web page. They also hold one to one meetings, and all parents receive comprehensive packs which summarise their children's experience successfully.

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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 rating 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 Prysg (Welsh to English).

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Publication date: 27/06/2024

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.

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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

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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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