Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys

Ysgol y Llys
Princes Avenue
Prestatyn
LL19 8RP

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Sion Jones
Person in charge	Helen Gilmore, Ann Begley
Number of places	60
Age range of children	2-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	32
Number of children funded for early education	26
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 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 provides the Welsh language 'Active Offer' and makes every effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and Welsh culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	This is the setting's first inspection
Date of previous Estyn inspection	May 2016
Date(s) of this/these inspection visit(s)	04/06/2024
Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys is located on a school site and offers full day care provision. The education session is provided during the morning and the setting also provides a breakfast session, Meithrin Mwy, after school sessions and Flying Start sessions. Very few children speak Welsh at home.	

Summary

Theme	Rating
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	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that practitioners question children effectively to encourage them to think for themselves and develop their ideas further

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children are happy and enjoy the company of their friends and practitioners when socialising with each other. They make choices and decisions regularly and enjoy the freedom to move around the setting, exploring the open spaces of the garden or moving to an indoor play area. Nearly all children are confident to approach practitioners or join a group of friends according to their preferences. They help themselves to resources comfortably, knowing that they have the freedom to do so. For example, children enjoy experimenting in the fairy garden, socialising in the role play area and discovering resources in the mark marking area. They feel comfortable asking for help to wipe their nose, put on their shoes, change clothes and use different equipment.

Almost all children settle quickly and proceed to play and socialise eagerly after arriving. They cope well and feel safe when approaching practitioners, sitting beside them and preparing for the day's familiar routine. Nearly all children are developing warm relationships with practitioners and are confident to call their names when needed which shows they have a sense of belonging. They enjoy developing their understanding of their identity, the local area and their friends. For example, during registration time, children chat happily about their feelings and experiences whilst naming their family members. Children are also given opportunities to take home a small case full of resources as part of the Welsh speaker of the week activity and fill a book with pictures of their experiences with their families.

Almost all children interact well and develop their social skills by talking and sharing while playing. They respect the feelings and interests of others by learning to work together and take turns. For example, in the recycling area, a group of children study a recycling site on a tablet before eagerly filling rubbish lorries with recycled items. While chatting, they share items such as plastic bottles and cardboard and go about sorting them. Nearly all children are willing to support each other, for example, when

sharing musical instruments to form a band. They interact well with visitors as they demonstrate what they are doing, such as pushing a wheelbarrow, sweeping the outdoor area and painting the fence with large brushes.

Most children persevere purposefully when learning. For example, they take an interest in experimenting with dough, creating sea animals, and mastering new skills with rollers and cutters. They show enjoyment when immersing themselves in their play. For example, when role playing, a group of children enjoy the company of a practitioner when preparing a pancake and talking about eggs, milk and how to mix and cook. Most children feel confident to experiment in their environment, for example, in the woods, they use magnifying glasses to look for small insects. Outside on the yard, a group of children enjoy the experience of seeing a practitioner lie on the floor and creating an outline around her with chalk while talking about people of different sizes.

Most children develop good independence skills, for example, when washing and drying their hands, using the toilet and brushing their teeth. They take pride in their achievements when completing tasks such as helping to put their rain boots back in the shoe storage unit and spreading butter on their crackers during snack time.

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

Most children make good progress. Nearly all children join in enthusiastically when singing Welsh lullabies and songs. They show interest and enjoyment when watching a Welsh language television programme, sitting on the mat and concentrating very well for an extended period of time. Nearly all children listen carefully and follow instructions successfully when moving from one activity to another. For example, they finish their play promptly to come together on the mat for story time.

A number of children are making good progress in their oral skills. The majority of them talk naturally when playing spontaneously while preparing a cup of tea and feeding the baby in the kitchen. They behave like readers when relaxing on the sofa, looking at familiar story books. They point at pictures and tell their own stories before going to choose other books independently.

Most children's physical skills are developing effectively, such as when using painting equipment for early mark making activities. Many children demonstrate proficiency when using large and small tools to create stars with dough and balancing while walking along a log. They challenge each other's physical skills naturally by running, pushing and racing vehicles around the outdoor area.

Many children are developing strong numeracy skills and use mathematical language when exploring colours and shapes in books and when playing games. During their play, nearly all children notice numbers and show an interest in them. For example, they request to play with the clock, moving the hands on the clock to snack time.

Some children show perseverance when problem-solving. For example, when building a tower with blocks they choose a variety of blocks of different sizes and shapes to build a tall tower.

Nearly all children make purposeful choices when creating artwork independently. For example, they choose a colour and tools to create pictures of sea animals on paper and on a digital screen. A small number of children have digital skills that are developing well. They can input instructions effectively to control toys so that they move towards the 2D shapes on the mat.

Outdoors, children show enjoyment when exploring the woods and ask to climb the trees like a squirrel from the story. Nearly all children work together effectively when looking for insects, with many trying to use Welsh vocabulary to name the insects.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and prioritise their health and safety successfully. As a result, they implement sound policies and procedures effectively. Practitioners have completed appropriate training on safeguarding children and the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. They keep accurate records of accidents and incidents and understand their responsibilities to safeguard children with allergies and to administer medication. Practitioners follow appropriate cleanliness practices during snack time and between activities as they encourage children to wash their hands regularly. They ensure children's privacy and dignity by following the nappy changing policy and keep accurate records. Practitioners follow purposeful procedures for children with additional learning needs by using effective networks. They follow a thorough and well-organised registration system and they ensure that records of consent are in place.

Practitioners have an affectionate relationship with children and treat them with care and respect. Practitioners are kind and model warm and natural interactions by teaching children to use kind hands and have fun while playing and sharing. They observe, listen and explain in a kind and caring manner which creates a sense of belonging. They praise children regularly and identify their requirements while encouraging them to succeed, for example when they share or complete a task. Practitioners reinforce clear and correct language when talking and singing about the daily routine. They offer comfort and support to children regularly. For example, practitioners sit with the children during activities or play beside them in the learning areas, reinforcing good manners in a natural way.

Practitioners know the children very well, and have a clear understanding of their individual needs and wishes. They encourage children to be confident as they persevere to solve problems such as building a tower, and celebrate when they succeed. For example, they take pictures of the children to record and share their achievements in special books that note the child's progress. Practitioners ensure a range of experiences which encourage children to learn by doing. For example, they provide innovative opportunities for children to enjoy stories where they thoroughly enjoy listening and participating. Practitioners ensure a good balance between promoting children's safety and supporting them to take risks. They encourage children to understand their environment by providing extensive experiences such as learning about nature in the woods and planting flowers, vegetables and fruits in the garden.

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 sound understanding of how children learn through playing and experimenting. There is a vary caring atmosphere at the setting where practitioners really know the children. Practitioners listen to children's voices and plan learning experiences accordingly. For example, practitioners create individual passports for the children and explore the globe after talking about going on holiday. Practitioners have a natural way of letting children lead their learning throughout the day. As a result, children engage well with their activities and are given valuable opportunities to follow their interests.

Practitioners offer a stimulating learning environment which provides appropriate experiences for children to develop their basic skills, especially their numeracy skills. They provide valuable opportunities to measure, count and match both indoors and outdoors. For example, practitioners place digital and balance scales in the mud kitchen as well as in the kitchen in the home corner indoors. Practitioners provide a collection of relevant fiction and non-fiction books for the children both indoors and outdoors.

Practitioners encourage children to treat living things with care and respect when gardening. Practitioners intervene appropriately to encourage children to understand simple behaviour rules such as sharing toys and taking turns. They celebrate diversity through stories and by playing with various dolls. Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to discuss their feelings in small groups and by reading suitable books in the quiet corner.

Practitioners plan purposeful opportunities to develop the children's communication skills. For example, they use various triggers such as stories, hunts, masks and lists to encourage children to find insects in the woods. However, not many practitioners question the children effectively and consistently in order to challenge to develop their learning. They motivate children effectively to develop their physical skills in both the indoor and outdoor areas. For example, they encourage children to use nets for fishing and to roll dough balls with their hands. However, practitioners do not always maximise opportunities to question the children in order to encourage them to think and develop their ideas further.

Leaders encourage practitioners to use language patterns and vocabulary to immerse children in the Welsh language effectively. They arrange purposeful experiences to celebrate their Welshness, such as wearing red to support the national football team and dancing to Welsh music on Welsh Language Music Day. Practitioners develop children's spiritual, moral, and social skills effectively by visiting the local chapel and creating red poppies on remembrance day.

The assessment and observation procedures are effective and practitioners use the information purposefully to plan valuable experiences for the children. Practitioners share information with parents and carers regularly about their child's progress and interests.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders ensure that the environment is safe and clean for the children and have robust arrival and departure procedures. There are gates for the outdoor areas that are used effectively and practitioners work together carefully to ensure that these practices are implemented. Visitors sign in at the school and at the setting and clear records are kept of every visit. Leaders ensure that the building's maintenance records are up to date and the setting's safety officer works effectively with practitioners to ensure that the safety practices are fit for purpose. Leaders conduct effective and purposeful risk assessments. These are reviewed regularly and are used in an effective and timely manner, such as to record any equipment that needs to be repaired urgently. Leaders keep a register of children and practitioners and ensure that the ratios are correct at all times. There are information boards inside the setting as well as on the outdoor walls which show clear evidence of practitioners, responsibilities, policies, certificates and appropriate safeguarding procedures.

Leaders ensure a high-quality environment which is warm and welcoming. They provide security, privacy and adequate space for the number of children who attend daily. Leaders provide suitable toilets and purposeful nappy changing facilities. They make effective use of the facilities, such as the main room, the area for preparing snacks, the office and the enclosed outdoor areas. Leaders ensure children have access to resources to encourage their independence. Children can access the indoor environment at all times as well as an exciting outdoor area which includes various surfaces. For example, children enjoy playing on the garden's uneven paths, the performance stage and the tunnel that leads to the construction area, which challenge the children and give them purposeful opportunities to take risks and develop their curiosity.

Leaders provide a variety of resources for children which are suitable for their age and development and these are stored at a low level. As a result, children have access to high-quality equipment, enabling them to choose and follow their interests. Indoors, children are given countless opportunities to develop their imagination by using real items such as a mixer, bowls and saucepans. Outdoors, leaders have created a garden where children are given effective opportunities to enjoy gardening, experimenting and using real equipment such as buckets and tools for measuring and carrying.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders have a clear vision, which is shared very effectively with all stakeholders. They have successfully created a supportive ethos where practitioners are valued. All the practitioners work together very effectively under a strong leader to create a homely and stimulating atmosphere for the children. They plan strategically to provide purposeful opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills. This is among the setting's strengths.

Leaders have delegated responsibilities very effectively and work together extremely well as a team. As a result, roles are defined clearly and there are robust procedures in place to note the setting's strengths and any areas for improvement. The leader is

very open to trialling systems in order to improve the service. They use the opinions of stakeholders successfully to improve the provision.

Practitioners are suitably qualified and have relevant experience in caring for children. Leaders undertake annual appraisals of the performance of practitioners, including self-appraisals. They follow safe, robust and timely recruitment processes. Leaders use funding, including grants, very effectively to improve the provision by considering their priorities. One noteworthy example of this is investing in a mud kitchen and a cupboard for the outdoor area as well as waterproof coats, hats and boots for practitioners.

Regular meetings are held with practitioners and the committee and thorough records are kept. There are positive links between the setting and the school, with both sharing the same site. The setting participates in regular safety drills with the school and is included in activities such as sports days and on the timetable for using the woodland. As a result, the transition arrangements are very smooth and ensure that children are confident when moving to the next stage of their education.

Leaders give parents and carers regular updates about their child's development and events through daily conversations, a digital app and during open mornings. Parents and carers appreciate the individual and specialist care which is provided for their children.

Leaders have developed strong and lasting links with a wide variety of partners. For example, a local farmer and the fire service are invited to the setting so that children can learn about their work. Also, children are given opportunities to visit the post office to send letters and buy tasty milkshakes from the café.

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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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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