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

Ysgol Feithrin Pont-y-pŵl

St James Hall
St James Field
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 6JT

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Feithrin Pont-y-pŵl

Name of setting	Ysgol Feithrin Pont-y-pŵl
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Helen Greenwood
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Helen Greenwood
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 and a half – 4 years old
Number of children funded for up to two terms	5
Number of children funded for up to five terms	17
Opening days / times	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 8:30am and 3:15pm Tuesday and Thursday between 8:30am and 12:45pm
Flying Start service	No
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	10th September 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	8th November 2013

Dates of this inspection visit(s)	08/03/2022

Additional information

Very few children come from homes in which Welsh is the first language.

Very few children speak English as an additional language.

The setting re-registered as a limited company on 26th January 2022.

Non-compliance

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

Recommendations

R1 Ensure a free flow for children to access learning and play in the outdoor area when they wish to do so

What happens next

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the excellent provision that was seen during the inspection, where an adult enables children to pursue their interests and provides experiences that engage their interest, to be disseminated on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being:

Nearly all children are happy, enthusiastic, and confident on arrival at the setting. Most express their feelings clearly and make effective choices about where and with whom to play. For example, they decide to continue to play with a jigsaw rather than joining others to listen to a story and choose where to play naturally while moving confidently from one activity to the next. Nearly all children show motivation and resilient perseverance in their play and learning. They respond very enthusiastically to the challenge and support of practitioners. Nearly all children express an opinion about their learning and play very confidently. A notable example of this is during the general election, when children were given an opportunity to learn about the meaning of voting by sharing their ideas and wishes for the role-play area and to choose which resources were needed.

Nearly all children cope very well when they separate from their parents and carers. They interact excellently with practitioners and visitors. They form exceptionally positive attachments with their key workers, which has a particularly good effect on their well-being and motivation. Practitioners pay attention to the children's ideas. They contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process and to continuous evaluations of activities and resources. For example, the children suggested that there should be a climbing wall on the steep slope to use the new slide and they use it enthusiastically. They trust the staff and are confident that they will value their interactions. Nearly all children feel safe and invite their friends to join in their play with very cheerfully.

Most children have exceptionally good independent skills. For example, they wash their hands, take off their coats and bags, and select their names during self-registration. Nearly all children behave excellently and politely and treat practitioners and their peers with respect, for example by waiting patiently for their turn. Nearly all children play together excellently, for example when preparing 'cawl' in the farm shop. Older children share and co-operate very well with the younger children and show excellent creativity and imagination, for example when making a tower from wooden blocks.

Nearly all children enjoy opportunities to develop imaginatively in the outdoor area. This has a very positive effect on their creativity. For example, they create a cardboard magnifying glass to watch the birds in the park. Most children enjoy playing in a group and a few take advantage of the small attractive and quiet places to be alone or with a friend. Most children demonstrate exceptional imaginative skills when discussing their favourite characters from their story books. Nearly all children explore the environment highly enthusiastically, for example by planting fruit and vegetables and searching for insects under the wood in the mud kitchen.

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

Most children make very good progress from their starting points, particularly in their numeracy skills, physical skills and when problem-solving. Many make sound

progress in their oral skills. Nearly all children show excellent levels of concentration and engagement with their learning, particularly when given the freedom to play spontaneously.

Most children combine their skills successfully in their natural play, for example when responding to the spontaneous challenge that was set on how to build a castle. They work together maturely when deciding which shape blocks are best to create windows. Most children's physical skills are developing masterfully as they overcome the problem of creating a drawbridge and a footpath. They challenge each other's physical skills naturally by placing very narrow blocks on the floor to make the challenge more difficult. Many children's creative skills are developing very effectively. They develop their ideas skilfully by searching for large pieces of blue paper to emulate water in the moat and work together to place 'crocodiles' in the water. A few children develop their marking skills purposefully to denote and count 20 crocodiles in the water.

Most children listen attentively and follow instructions successfully. Around half develop their communication skills very well when discussing recent events in new contexts, for example when describing in an extended sentence how a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly.

Most children listen very well to stories and many offer a positive response to an adult's questions. A few take an interest in books independently following their visit to the local park to identify which birds live there. Nearly all children use mark-making equipment highly successfully to draw and make marks. Around half develop their understanding of writing for a purpose well, for example by creating a shopping list in the farm shop.

Many children make sound progress in their numeracy skills and use mathematical language successfully when investigating shape, pattern, and size in their environment. Many children have an exceptional understanding of number and count up to 10 crocodiles confidently, and the older children count up to 20 effectively. A very few recite numbers up to 100 when immersed in their play. Many older children weigh real vegetables in the farm shop on balance scales and digital scales in particular and pay for them purposefully with coins from the till.

A majority of children develop their understanding of how to use a mobile telephone to receive orders in the shop. They use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) independently as a natural part of their play and learning.

Most children develop their thinking and creative skills effectively and investigate the process of mixing powder paint with water to create a range of different coloured flowers very effectively. A few develop their skills very skilfully when mixing different tones of red paint.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills exceptionally well. They master the climbing wall and the slide confidently. Most children develop their balancing skills masterfully, for example by walking along a wooden beam without falling. Nearly all children develop their co-ordination skills effectively while expressing themselves and enjoying folk dancing and clog dancing. Most develop their fine motor skills highly

successfully by engaging excellently when using a real saw, hammer, nails, bolts, and locks in their independent play.

Care and development:

Practitioners manage interactions with the children highly effectively and there is a wonderful relationship between the practitioners and children. Practitioners have excellent experience of supporting children to make friends, manage their feelings and cope with difficult situations. They support the children to be able to concentrate on developing their resilience and perseverance particularly well. Practitioners provide children with strong support to ensure that they develop a very sound understanding of their emotions, for example by using their observations of children's feeling during self-registration each day. Practitioners support children skilfully by talking naturally as the children play or during circle time sessions. The gentle and calm attitudes of all practitioners have a very positive effect on the children's behaviour.

Practitioners have a rigorous understanding of their responsibilities and, through daily routines, they provide a wide and rich range of opportunities for children to develop and excel. Practitioners succeed in ensuring that snack times and lunchtimes are valuable opportunities to develop social skills, by sitting with the children and speaking with them naturally. Practitioners are excellent role models for the children to emulate in terms of how to stay healthy and how to treat people with respect and courtesy.

Practitioners follow rigorous and robust procedures to ensure the children's health and safety. They keep appropriate, detailed records of any concerns, accidents, incidents, and relevant information. This is monitored each week by the leader, who discusses with key workers and other practitioners to agree on appropriate outcomes. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners have up-to-date first aid certificates, which is a reflection of the strong emphasis that is placed on safety. Practitioners promote good practices in terms of ensuring that children stay healthy, for example by providing healthy and nutritious food and by encouraging children to wash their hands regularly.

Practitioners have rigorous knowledge of all children's individual needs. They plan in detail for the next steps and review the children's progress highly effectively by playing alongside them in a sensitive and stimulating way. Practitioners have excellent knowledge of every child's needs and preferences, including those with additional learning needs and more able and talented children. They meet all children's needs very successfully, for example by showing a calendar to a child who is interested in an adult's record of the date on a piece of work. As a result, the child's numeracy skills are stretched by pointing successfully to his birthday and the adult's birthday. Practitioners act highly skilfully on information from parents during registration. Practitioners engage exceptionally well with parents and specialist services when identifying each child's targets and reviewing their progress.

Practitioners promote the children's awareness of the importance of treating people from all cultural backgrounds with respect and tolerance. They develop their understanding of celebrations such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali effectively.

Practitioners ensure that children understand sustainability and recycling through real-life experiences. They take the children around the town to pick litter and help the local authority to collect extensive plastic for recycling. They also receive support from parents to re-use sustainable, natural resources to enrich their environments.

Practitioners ensure that all children do almost everything for themselves during their natural play throughout the day. As a result, nearly all children are curious, enjoy asking questions and develop exceptional independence.

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

Practitioners use an innovative and highly effective approach to planning that focuses directly on the children's interest and what is important to parents. Practitioners have an exceptionally good understanding of child development. As a result, they provide stimulating and purposeful experiences that are developmentally suitable and meaningful to the children. Practitioners have a natural and impressive way of allowing the children to guide their learning throughout the day. They ensure long periods of seamless play, which allows children the time to become immersed in their learning and what interests them. Practitioners encourage the children's natural curiosity exceptionally well. For example, when the children find a spider, they encourage them to find the web outside.

Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to learn and take an interest in their local area to reinforce their sense of belonging to the community. An excellent aspect of this is the weekly visit to the local market to buy fresh vegetables for the farm shop and fruit for their daily snack. Leaders have established an exceptionally close relationship with an old people's home. Children visit every fortnight to join the residents to read a story, plant bulbs and celebrate their birthdays. Practitioners make excellent use of the park to provide thrilling experiences to marvel at nature. For example, they observe daffodils blooming and feel the frost on the grass after a cold night. As a result of birdwatching in the park and pursuing the children's ideas, practitioners have developed a bird-watching area at the setting. They use the park to hold the annual sports day so that the community can enjoy their company.

Practitioners have excellent methods for ensuring a sense of Welshness and pride in being a part of Wales. They plan rich experiences for children to contribute to the Gŵyl Feithrin (Nursery Festival) and the Urdd National Eisteddfod. Practitioners work with a local artist to develop projects with the children. They also provide rich experiences for children to join in with folk dancing and clog dancing and arrange visits to nearby theatres to watch Welsh productions. There is a highly visible and impressive Welsh ethos across the setting.

Practitioners observe the children's patterns of repetitive play very well. As a result, they provide experiences that allow them to pursue their strong drive to repeat their investigations. This is a necessary step to enable the children to create meaning from what they do. Practitioners are particularly good at using their weekly observations to refine their planning in order to make adaptations to meet all children's needs. They support children to take risks and develop their confidence and physical independence outstandingly. As a result, children become immersed in their play wholly independently without adult support. An excellent example of this is the way in

which children take risks and use a saw and hammer to hit a nail with complete confidence when making banners.

Children's interests are central to how practitioners plan jointly and provide excellent opportunities for children to develop all of their skills in highly appealing contexts. A very strong element is the way in which children work together in the farm shop. The experience of taking responsibility for serving customers develops their communication skills effectively. Practitioners provide opportunities for children to use mathematical vocabulary by weighing different vegetables very effectively and develop their physical skills by chopping real vegetables to make soup. Practitioners support their social and problem-solving skills by providing real-life experiences of using ICT equipment in their play. One of the main strengths of teaching is that practitioners respect the play process, rather than focussing on the end product.

Practitioners show excellent appreciation and respect towards each child's early mark-making. As a result, children are confident and very willing to represent their ideas by creating shopping lists for more vegetables from the local market and illustrating the journey through the community to the market.

The setting has robust procedures for observing and assessing children. Practitioners consider skilfully when to intervene in play at appropriate times. This is a strength and a highly effective method of ensuring each child's progress. They use information from their observations skilfully to plan the next steps in learning. Reports for parents summarise the children's strengths and areas for development successfully.

Environment:

The environment is of an excellent standard and provides valuable and very extensive opportunities for the children. Leaders ensure that the environment is welcoming and interesting and celebrates the children's creativity by displaying their work skilfully. This creates a sense of self-worth and belonging. Leaders provide stimulating play and learning areas, which include quiet and role-play areas, opportunities for children to investigate and inquire, and activities that have a very strong effect on their imagination. Leaders ensure that resources are kept at a practical level for every child to be able to reach them easily and to enable children to fetch them and put them away without adult intervention. Practitioners provide an environment that reflects and respects other cultures very effectively. For example, they invite a visitor to the setting to share a range of musical instruments from different countries and share a variety of clothing from different cultures.

Practitioners ensure that the children are safe and stay healthy by following a range of very clear and comprehensive policies. They prioritise assessing all risks that are associated with the indoor and outdoor areas daily. Arrangements for safeguarding are well-established and very effective. Practitioners ensure that there are thorough systems for picking children up at the end of sessions. They practise fire drills regularly so that the children are familiar with these arrangements. The setting is clean and organised and very well-maintained. Practitioners follow rigorous hygiene procedures and conduct infection control inspections regularly. Furniture, equipment, toys, and resources are appropriate and of a high standard and are well-maintained. Practitioners comply very well with the relevant safety standards.

The quality of the outdoor area is excellent and provides exceptional experiences for children to learn, play and relax. The area has been planned to enable children to develop physically, creatively and investigatively, for example the exceptional use of the greenhouse. Children grow strawberries and tomatoes and sell strawberries to parents at the gate and cook with the tomatoes in the kitchen. The area includes a number of sheltered spaces that provide an opportunity for children to be alone if they feel the need.

Leadership and management:

The leader succeeds in creating an extremely homely and supportive ethos where children and practitioners feel that they are valued. The leader has a very clear vision that ensures that children flourish in a happy learning environment. She shares this vision excellently with practitioners, parents, and the management committee. She is an inspirational leader with high expectations of herself and the practitioners. The leader supports practitioners successfully and challenges them to do their best, and leads by example. A strong element of this is her support for less confident practitioners to develop their Welsh and encouraging them to attend weekly training, in addition to providing them with language pattern cards to ensure support and accuracy. This has a highly positive effect on their confidence and on the way that they interact with the children. The leader excels at creating a culture of joint ownership, which leads to everyone having a strong desire to improve continuously. They work excellently as a team. This has an outstanding effect on the developing the children's well-being, in addition to highly stimulating provision.

Leaders have established highly successful procedures to identify the setting's strengths and any areas for development. Parents contribute regularly to the setting's procedures through purposeful questionnaires and they are confident that the leader and the team listen and act on their views successfully. The leader is keen to improve all aspects of the service. An excellent example of this is the use of weekly staff meetings, which are embedded firmly. They allocate dedicated time to reflect, identify and act on what needs to be developed further. This has a very positive effect on children's progress and well-being. Leaders evaluate their development plan regularly and take advantage of feedback from the management committee, parents, and the link teacher.

Leaders have established highly effective procedures for recruiting safely and managing staff and resources. The leader scrutinises the performance of all staff very well. She leads inclusively, which enables practitioners to undertake their delegated responsibilities successfully. There are numerous opportunities for practitioners to receive purposeful training that has a very strong influence on provision. For example, they are trialling a different approach to planning that corresponds to the requirements of the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. The leader monitors the effect of training particularly well and ensures that practitioners make the best use of what they have learned.

Leaders monitor the budget thoroughly to provide an education of exceptional quality for every child, for example by developing an outdoor area that enriches children's learning experiences and skills highly successfully.

There are positive links between the leader and local schools. She works closely with them to ensure that children transition successfully and move knowledgeably to the next stage in their education. The leader ensures that the community is a key part of the setting. One of the setting's main strengths is the special relationship it has established with parents. Parents and carers value the individual and specialist care that is provided for their children.

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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