



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

A report on

Cylch Meithrin Machynlleth

**Yr Asgell, High School Campus
Bro Hyddgen School
Aberystwyth Road
SY20 8DR**

Date of inspection: October 2022

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 Machynlleth

Name of setting	Cylch Meithrin Machynlleth
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Tamsin Davies
Person in charge	Caryl Edwards
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2-4 years old
Number of 3- and 4-year olds	18
Number of children funded for early education	16
Opening days / times	8.45 -15.45 Monday – Thursday 9.00 – 15.00 Friday
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	Welsh
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service which provides the Welsh Language 'Active Offer'. It provides a service that anticipates, identifies and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of children who use or may use the service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	First post-registration inspection
Date of previous Estyn inspection	March 2016
Date(s) of this/these inspection visit(s)	18/10/2022
The service re-registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in April 2020.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop the use of assessments and observations further to take full advantage of the children's special interests, and extend the learning
- R2 Ensure there are opportunities to develop children's Welsh oral skills
- R3 Improve the information shared with parents about their children's developmental progress

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being:

Most children are confident communicators and have good opportunities to make choices. Nearly all children make mature choices and decisions about their play and learning. They confidently navigate the different areas and choose resources to use in their play. For example, one child went to the cookery area to get a measuring spoon to use in the role play area kitchen.

Nearly all children feel absolutely at home in the setting and love attending. They arrive happy and eager to play. Any child who is unsettled is supported and comforted by the practitioners and they quickly settle. The majority of children are lively and express enthusiasm and enjoyment, smiling and laughing as they proudly present their offerings to practitioners. They show great interest in the activities available. Most children have a strong sense of belonging and are familiar with the setting's daily routines. For example, a few children are confident to share their play or to interact with visitors to the service and are aware of the session's routine.

Interactions between children and adults are consistently very good. The children are confident to approach practitioners to ask for help, ask a question or obtain something from them. They are always well received by the practitioners, and as a result relationships are strong. The children cooperate well and most children are happy to share their toys or equipment with others. The children express empathy and are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, when one child lay quietly on the carpet, another child went over to make sure they were okay.

The children have several opportunities to initiate their own play, and to influence their tasks and activities. They are extremely independent and confident handling equipment. In addition, they persevere maturely with their tasks for appropriate periods of time. For example, many children focus for long periods of time, making marks on the illuminating tablet, cleaning and drying the screen and starting again. They take responsibility for their personal hygiene. For example, they get a tissue themselves to wipe their nose and immediately dispose of it in the bin.

Nearly all children experience interesting opportunities that are appropriate for their age and development and that promote their skills. The children explore the range of areas available very confidently and also have quiet time to relax. The children have some good opportunities to develop their independence skills, thus enabling them to do things successfully for themselves. Children help to prepare a healthy snack for snack time and successfully pour water or milk for their drinks. Most children wash their hands when they arrive at the setting or before mealtimes, and they do so wholly independently.

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

Most children arrive at the setting prepared to learn and settle quickly in its welcoming environment. The smooth morning transition period enhances their ability to become absorbed in their activities very early on.

Most children pay good attention when listening and understand simple instructions when playing and interacting with adults and practitioners. They thoroughly enjoy joining in with familiar rhymes and songs and are able to focus for extended periods when sharing a book or informally making marks on the illuminating tablets. Nearly all of the children show a sound understanding of the Welsh language. However, very few respond and use familiar words naturally in conversation.

Many children show a good understanding of mathematics when confidently experimenting with 2-dimensional shapes to build a house and when managing to follow a pattern with blue, brown, blue, brown magnetic triangles. They demonstrate good problem solving skills using colourful number plates to fill a 100 square and diligently persevere to ensure accuracy. Many show a good understanding of number vocabulary, adding blocks one by one as they build a tower of 3D blocks. However, they are not yet ready to use the Welsh language naturally when playing.

Most children are developing to become knowledgeable and confident in using electronic equipment such as a telephone in the role play area. By exploring and experimenting with electronic equipment every day, the children develop their understanding of the role this equipment plays in their everyday lives. Most children handle telephones creatively as they play, spending time pretending to talk to their mum or dad. They can use the setting's actual mobile phone to play a game, which encourages them to listen and match sounds in the environment with familiar pictures.

The children's physical skills are developing well. Most are happy to venture and walk around the balancing equipment and handle apparatus in the outdoor area confidently when exploring the mud kitchen and experimenting with water squirters. They challenge themselves to develop fine motor skills by handling smaller objects when playing a game or using real equipment carefully to make a cup of tea. Almost all children have very good sharing and collaborating skills.

Care and development:

Most practitioners work consistently to keep the children safe and healthy. They understand and implement the setting's policies and procedures purposefully. All practitioners have received training on safeguarding children, and are confident of how to act should they have any concerns about a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. Most practitioners identify risks and actively manage them. For example, they complete a check list of risks on a daily basis and regularly tidy the environment to minimise dangers. They implement good cleaning and hygiene routines. The practitioners know the children very well and have a thorough understanding of their needs and interests. Consequently, they respond very well and sensitively to the children's needs. For example, practitioners sit close to speak to children who are unsure when meeting unfamiliar people.

Most practitioners are consistently responsive; they listen to the children and respect their views. They support children to speak or express themselves extremely well and encourage meaningful responses and interactions. For example, a practitioner responded positively to a child's request for a book to read. Interactions are positive, showing warmth and kindness. The children spontaneously hug practitioners or sit on

their laps when reading a book. They are sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual children. The practitioners clearly understand the behaviour management policy, and act as good role models.

Practitioners support and provide good play opportunities. They are committed to providing a wide range of learning activities in accordance with the children's interests. Practitioners have a good understanding of the children's development and needs. They consistently show dignity and respect for the children. There are efficient procedures available to support children with additional learning needs and practitioners have a thorough knowledge of how to refer children with additional learning needs to the relevant support agencies. Practitioners promote the children's independence skills very positively. For example, they encourage the children to put their coats and bags on their own hooks and offer support if required.

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

All practitioners collaborate very well. They offer the children opportunities to play and experiment with a good variety of real-life apparatus, both indoors and outdoors. They have appropriate expectations and ensure there are activities that are of interest to most children, such as building with big and small blocks, painting, mark-making and role play. Practitioners successfully enrich the environment by providing open-ended resources that spark the children's curiosity.

The practitioners supervise the children effectively and show consistent care and respect towards each and every one. They respond appropriately to the children's interests and ensure there is provision that meets individuals' needs. For example, they provide dinosaurs in the clothes case to meet the needs of children who love dinosaurs. However, practitioners do not use the information they glean through observation to adapt the provision in accordance with the children's interests and promote their learning.

The practitioners encourage children to use their numeracy skills very well. For example, they question the children skilfully as they play with 2D shapes to create 3D models and when matching colourful number plates. They manage to support and develop mathematical concepts effectively and consequently, the children develop confidence in noticing shape, symmetry and pattern when building.

Overall, the provision offers purposeful opportunities to develop the children's early ICT skills. They support the children well to learn from their mistakes and in the best cases, ask open-ended questions to encourage the children to think and solve problems. For example, when encouraging them to think of the best method of filling a bottle of water.

The majority of practitioners model verbal language very well, introducing language patterns, vocabulary and phrases, and singing lively nursery rhymes. They support the children's skills to communicate verbally and non-verbally, responding sensitively to their efforts. Nonetheless, there are not enough opportunities for the children to repeat and use simple language patterns to develop confidence and encourage conversation. They provide a wide range of suitable reading material which encourages the children to make choices. They support the children's enthusiasm

well and are willing to spend time promoting understanding and developing vocabulary. The practitioners offer a range of interesting activities for the children to make marks, including a tablet that illuminates, making marks in the dough and investigating with paint.

The practitioners appropriately provide information for parents and carers about the children's achievements in a report at the end of the year. They share a large variety of photographs on social media showing the children enjoying a wide range of activities.

Environment:

The leaders ensure that the environment is safe, clean and well maintained, both indoors and outdoors. They have robust arrangements for receiving visitors to the building, and practitioners follow effective safety procedures for children's arrival and departure. The leaders update the purposeful and thorough risk assessments regularly and implement them effectively. The leaders are very aware of safety issues and the requirements to conduct regular fire drills. The setting shares an outdoor area with the school, and they have a dedicated enclosed area solely for them. This area is closed off, with an external fence preventing any child from leaving the site without an adult. The leaders ensure that any safety and security tests are undertaken in the environment on a timely basis and they work effectively to deal with any matters that arise.

The leaders organise the environment effectively and consequently provide a wide range of play opportunities that are suitable for the children. The leaders have developed the outdoor area and it offers exciting opportunities for the children to learn and play in the fresh air and improve their skills. The provision is developing to offer seamless access to the outdoor area with the doors open throughout the session and, as a result, the children can choose where to play. The premises are welcoming, warm and accessible to all. The practitioners arrange the room to provide the children with stimulating play areas. The role play area contains real crockery, which promotes the children's awareness of the need to respect and look after the resources. They offer the children purposeful opportunities to use the equipment and resources independently. For example, everything is stored on open shelves so that the children can see what is available.

Leaders provide good resources to promote children's curiosity. The children enjoy playing with mathematical, creative, social, small world and building resources. Most resources are natural and children have opportunities to use these in their play. For example, the children use leaves to make an impression in the dough, or a pumpkin to paint outside. A shelter in the outdoor area protects the children from the sun and rain. There are suitable shoes and clothes for inclement weather, which permit the children to play outside whatever the weather. There is a wide variety of furniture, toys and apparatus appropriate to the children's age and of good quality. Consequently, the children are able to make sensible choices when playing and learning independently.

Leadership and management:

Leaders have a strong vision based on ensuring the happiness and safety of all children in a joyful and homely atmosphere. They share this vision successfully with parents, and external agencies who support the setting. The leaders cooperate very well as a team to offer high quality care and support. For example, the team was busy recently refurbishing and rearranging the environment to ensure they offered the children provision of the highest standard. They provide useful guidance and support to new staff members and show respect towards their contributions.

The setting's leaders make very effective use of grant funding to improve the learning environment and offer the children beneficial experiences. They cooperate as a team to secure grants to improve the indoor and outdoor learning resources. They use this funding purposefully to buy resources that have led to the provision of exciting opportunities for the children to investigate and experiment. For example, they have invested in a useful shelter and a mud kitchen in the outdoor area which have transformed learning experiences and have had a very positive impact on the children's physical skills. They have also renewed the internal floor surface which has ensured the ability to create a wide range of opportunities for children to experiment and investigate.

Leaders have adequate arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. They know the children well and are very sensitive to their daily needs. The practitioners understand the need to let the children navigate their own pathway.

Leaders follow timely and robust recruitment processes in order to protect the children. The performance management process is firmly established and encourages practitioners to attend a range of training and apply their learning. Purposeful supervision and appraisals are held on a regular basis.

Members of the management committee are very supportive of the work of the setting and respond appropriately to suggestions made by the person in charge. There is an open and honest partnership between the setting and the agencies supporting it, ensuring an extremely effective working relationship. The management committee has effective arrangements to monitor the setting's work.

The setting has a very good partnership with parents. They invest a lot of time getting to know the children before they start, and use the information about the children's prior experiences effectively to facilitate the settling-in process in the setting. The close partnership between the setting and the three primary schools to which the children go also contributes to a smooth transition. The setting makes effective use of social media to inform parents of their service and to offer ideas for activities to complete at home. However, very little information about the children's direct development is shared with parents during the year.

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)

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 20/12/2022