



# Report summary for parents and carers on Ely and Caerau Integrated Children's Centre

**Date of inspection: November 2023**

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

# Evaluation

Ely and Caerau Children's Centre is a safe, calm and inspiring place where young children can explore and learn through play. A team of skilled, experienced practitioners provide many exciting experiences and activities that encourage young children to develop their skills and build their knowledge and understanding of the world. The head and deputy head of centre are passionate about, and have a strong understanding of, early childhood education. They encourage all practitioners, governors and parents to understand the centre's aims and philosophy and to remember that thinking when working with the children. Key to the centre's success is the way in which leaders have brought each part of the provision together to establish a smooth transition for children from community family sessions and childcare through to the nursery and meithrin. All practitioners take part in professional conversations to help to make decisions about the centre's future. In addition, senior leaders recognise the importance of investing in their staff and their professional learning so that they can offer teaching and learning experiences of the highest quality.

Children's well-being and progress are at the heart of the centre's work. Practitioners have a deep understanding of child development and they observe and follow each child's needs and interests. Daily meetings to discuss their planned and spontaneous observations of children's progress enable them to adapt the rich play environment or resources and offer experiences to suit individuals and groups of children, including those with additional learning needs. Practitioners harness children's enthusiasm and challenge them to take the next steps in their learning. This focus on engaging and motivating children fires their natural curiosity. Children become engrossed in their play, persevere at their activities and are confident to take calculated risks, often challenging themselves and showing pride in their achievements.

Many children's physical, creative and critical thinking skills are particularly strong because of their extensive experiences, especially those in the outdoors, including in the Forest School and at the Beach School. In all areas of the learning environment, practitioners encourage the children to try new experiences, think of creative ways to solve problems and question the world around them. Practitioners help children to understand language and express their views by modelling vocabulary and sentence patterns in English and Welsh. They introduce them to the written word through stories, rhymes and mark-making. They offer them experiences that lead to early mathematical exploration and understanding, and gently familiarise them with the digital world. Children respond by imitating, asking and answering questions, joining in with familiar songs and rhymes, handling books and 'writing' at appropriate times in their play, perhaps to create a shopping list. They become fascinated by comparing the size of items around them, sort items according to colour or shape, and they use blocks to create structures, sometimes carefully designed to be symmetrical.

## Cameo – using learning journals to capture children’s progress and develop a shared understanding of progression in the early years

The centre uses learning journals to capture progress in each child’s skills, knowledge and understanding. They include written observations of the child and spontaneous field notes from practitioners, parents and others. Photographs and videos enrich the learning journals; they capture developmental progress and demonstrate how children make connections across all aspects of their learning. The process has evolved and continues to improve over time in response to practitioners’ reflection and discussion within the centre and collaboration with a local early years network. This professional dialogue supports a shared understanding of progression.

The way in which the nursery environment celebrates the children’s and practitioners’ identity and experiences through photographs and displays creates a strong sense of belonging for children and their families. There is real warmth and trust between practitioners and children, and they are at ease in one another’s company. This reassures parents and is especially important to children who find it difficult to settle at first or those who may need extra help to make progress. Practitioners make the most of on-site expertise, such as the Early Years Inclusion Team. This helps them to identify children with additional learning needs early in their education and enables them to offer the most appropriate support for them and their families.

Senior leaders value their practitioners and all staff work together to make the centre successful. Leaders respect their views and professionalism and support their well-being effectively. Everyone contributes meaningfully to the centre’s continuous self-evaluation at regular intervals through the year and helps to identify the priorities for improvement that will make the greatest difference to children. Actions to improve the use of Welsh across the centre have raised the profile of the language in the nursery considerably and enhanced Welsh language development in meithrin. This has given practitioners the skills, confidence and enthusiasm to use the language every day so that children hear, understand and begin to use the language more naturally. Governors have a real grasp of the centre’s role in the community and support leaders’ decisions, such as funding enrichment activities to ensure that children affected by poverty and disadvantage do not miss out. They offer sensitive challenge in important areas, including questioning leaders about decisions relating to the curriculum and changes in assessment practices.

# Recommendations and next steps

There are no specific recommendations relating to this inspection.

The centre should continue its improvement journey.

## Statutory compliance

### Safeguarding arrangements

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

### Healthy eating and drinking

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

### School finances

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including use of the pupil development grant.

### Health and safety (site security)

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

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