



Estyn

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

Report on

Camau Cyntaf – First Steps Cylch Meithrin Ynys-y-bwl

**Glyn Street
Church Vestry
Ynys-y-bwl
Pontypridd
CF37 3DS**

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 Camau Cyntaf – First Steps Cylch Meithrin Ynys-y-bwl

Name of the setting	Camau Cyntaf – First Steps Cylch Meithrin Ynys-y-bwl
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Lisa Thomas
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Stephanie Williams
Number of places	19
Children's age range	2–4 years old
Number of children funded for up to 2 terms	3
Number of children funded for up to 5 terms	0
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday 8.45am – 3.30pm
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Bilingual
Is the Childcare Offer available at this setting?	Yes
The Welsh-language Active Offer	This is a service that is working towards providing an Active Offer for the Welsh language, and intends to be a bilingual service or demonstrate a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	14/02/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	12/06/2012
Date of this inspection visit / dates of these inspection visits	29/03/2022
Very few of the children speak Welsh at home.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was found during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the provision of the Welsh language so that the practitioners give the children sufficient opportunities to respond in the language

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that will show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being:

Most of the children settle in very quickly and form positive emotional attachments with the practitioners and the other children. They are enthusiastic on arrival and go straight to the wide range of activities and resources available to them. For example, about half went straight to playing with dough and they love to choose cutters of different shapes to cut the dough. With help, the children enjoy singing about a shark when one of them finds a shark-shaped cutter.

The children have a strong voice. They express their views and regularly contribute ideas to the planning. For example, once they have expressed that they want to learn about dinosaurs, they now do so and enjoy using the range of new resources.

Most of the children show a positive attitude to their play and learning. They concentrate for appropriate periods and are beginning to understand their skills in relation to risk and can hit nails into a trunk with skill.

Most of the children enjoy the stimulating activities. Many love to use a paint brush and water to wash the railings, create marks with chalk and paint, and take turns to throw balls at a target. One child is excited whilst showing that he can climb a wall with help and is delighted when he compares his achievement to that of a superhero.

The children have special opportunities to develop independence skills and the real-life resources contribute to that. Nearly all of the children move confidently and independently from one area to another, choosing appropriate toys and equipment. Most know how to stay healthy – for example, they wash their hands thoroughly when arriving and before eating food. The helper of the day enjoys sharing dishes with the children at snack time. About half like to help tidy up and clean the tables and floors and use age-appropriate equipment whilst doing so. Nearly all of the children can recognise their coat, and many can put on their coats independently.

The children develop good social skills. They welcome friends when they arrive, and they play together enthusiastically. Most of them behave appropriately. They learn to respect their environment and nearly all independently recycle materials and dispose of food. They have countless opportunities to use real-life resources. For example, they use a hammer in a safe environment. Snacks are social occasions where most of them enjoy helping each other and chatting purposefully.

Learning (this is only applicable to three- and four-year-olds who are not educated in a maintained setting):

There is no report on children's learning. This is because there were not enough three- or four-year-olds present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere that we could report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development:

The practitioners prioritise the children's health and safety. The arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners regularly attend bespoke safeguarding training, and the leaders attend higher level training. They are very aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and the safeguarding policy is comprehensive. The practitioners have attended a wide range of appropriate training, including risk assessments, first aid, allergies and food hygiene. They record accidents and administer first aid appropriately. The practitioners prepare suitable snacks that offer the children a good variety of healthy foods and this reinforces their awareness of healthy eating habits. The arrangements for the children with allergies are particularly good. The practitioners provide exciting physical activities on a regular basis, including dancing, climbing, or throwing balls in the indoor and outdoor area. The practitioners make every effort to ensure good hygiene procedures. For example, they disinfect the tables before and after snacks and teach the children about the importance of hand washing and tidying.

All of the practitioners know the children and their families very well and, as a result, they suitably plan for them. They have a sound understanding of their individual needs, abilities and interests. Practitioners receive a lot of useful information about the children's background and individual needs before they start, and key workers maintain close contact with the parents or carers. The provision for additional learning needs is particularly good.

The practitioners interact well with the children. They are always kind and gentle when speaking to the children and create a relaxed atmosphere. The practitioners encourage the children to define and guide their own play and only intervene when necessary. About half of the practitioners extend the children's understanding through sensitive questioning. The practitioners use positive behaviour management strategies and set firm boundaries in a fair way. Nearly all praise the children often and this has a positive effect on the children's self-confidence.

The practitioners promote opportunities for children to learn and develop effectively. They have embarked on an effective plan that promotes the use of natural resources to develop children's imagination, problem-solving skills and independence. They introduce Welsh rhymes and literacy at circle time and give the children time to discuss emotions. They encourage the children to express their feelings and to try to explain the reason.

Teaching and assessing (this is only applicable to three- and four-year-olds who are not educated in a maintained setting):

All of the practitioners use a good range of bespoke teaching methods, which have a positive effect on the children's knowledge and understanding. Their enthusiastic teaching motivates the children to work together productively, which successfully develops their skills. The practitioners are keen for the children to take sensible risks by experimenting intelligently in their independent play and learning. As a result, the practitioners plan beneficial learning and play experiences that encourage the children to take risks and become confident explorers of their environment.

The practitioners intervene sensibly during activities, which provide effective opportunities for the children to learn independently. They have productive discussions with the children on how to improve their work. As a result, the practitioners use observations and assessments effectively to plan for the next steps in the children's development.

The practitioners provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which reflects the children's interests well. They plan fun activities that successfully develop the children's cognitive skills through enterprise and investigation. For example, they create shadows with a torch and their fingers in the secret area. As a result, the planning stimulates the children to play and learn effectively through practical challenges.

The practitioners plan interesting opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. They skilfully question them as they create marks with a rake in the sand and challenge the children to use money at the local charity shop. They also encourage the children to take pictures of their work with electronic tablets. However, the majority of the practitioners do not always encourage the children to respond in Welsh.

The practitioners successfully develop the children's physical skills such as encouraging them to crawl through tunnels and mixing vinegar and baking soda into plastic bottles to launch as rockets. In addition, they encourage the children to play in the outdoor area to develop their creative skills. For example, they encourage the children to use paint and sand to create patterns on a mirror. The practitioners provide interesting problem-solving activities in real-life contexts, which include using the children's fine motor skills to scour potatoes and use forges.

The practitioners develop children's spiritual, moral and social skills effectively. They nurture values such as honesty, fairness and respect well during snack time and when sharing resources such as chalk and hammers in the outdoor area. As a result, the practitioners promote principles that help the children to effectively differentiate between right and wrong.

They promote Welsh culture well by celebrating St David's Day, folk dancing, and singing traditional rhymes. In addition, they successfully celebrate diversity and the wider world by learning about Diwali customs and the Chinese New Year.

The practitioners provide parents and carers with useful information about their children's achievements on social media, in annual reports and through discussions at the setting.

The environment:

The leaders ensure that the environment is safe and clean and, as a result, promote the safety and welfare of the children. The setting has sound arrangements for receiving visitors to the building and they follow effective safety procedures when the children enter and leave the premises. The setting is cleaned daily and is well maintained.

The practitioners regularly update tailored and thorough risk assessments and implement them effectively. They allow the children to take safe risks that positively affect their well-being and development. Fire risk assessments are comprehensive. A fire drill is held every term and the fire-fighting equipment is checked regularly. Safety checks are conducted annually on the electrical equipment. As a result, the children are very safe at the setting.

The environment is welcoming and stimulating and there are attractive displays. Natural resources are used to create a homely atmosphere. For example, there is a piece of wood with lights on in the sensory area and numbered wooden rings are used to promote circle time arithmetic. The environment is very inclusive and all children, including those with additional learning needs, have easy and equal access to all the various resources and activities. For example, the bench and the press in the indoor area are purpose-built at nursery age level so that children of this age have opportunities to use them.

The bathroom includes two toilets and a nappy-changing area. The practitioners always respect the children's privacy and there are robust nappy-changing processes in place in a confined area.

There is a rich supply of good-quality resources, appropriate to the children's age and development. For example, there are a variety of old and new scales for the children to learn different ways of weighing. There is also a good range of resources for the children to develop their awareness of recycling and sustainability. For example, when using old china and old scales from the charity shop.

The leaders have successfully arranged the stimulating environment and ensure that they make the best use of the provision. They use the environment when planning purposeful and exciting play and learning opportunities for the children to develop their skills. For example, they offer the children opportunities to mix colours whilst stamping, sorting animals, and experimenting with magnets and a metal detector. They have ensured an effective flow between the indoor and outdoor areas, complementing the holistic ethos of promoting children's independence and development.

Leadership and management

The leaders ensure that the setting's leadership strategies are thorough and stable, and they successfully focus on creating consistent improvements to the provision. Their clear and reliable vision ensures that the diligent practitioners work together enthusiastically to support the children's learning and development. In addition, they offer careful pastoral support to the children, and intelligently support their parents. As a result, all of the practitioners constantly motivate the children to do their best, through interesting challenges and sensible stimulation.

The leaders set aspirational expectations by supporting and challenging everyone to maintain high standards. Their knowledge of the setting's strengths and issues for improvement is thorough and their realistic policies and philosophy harmonise the setting's work skilfully. Rigorous self-evaluation procedures ensure reliable targets in the development plan, such as improving the use of Welsh by the practitioners and

the children. As a result, these detailed and effective procedures have an incredibly positive impact on the setting's practices.

The leaders ensure that practitioners work competently as a team. They are conscientious and listen sensibly to the suggestions of the leaders and officers of the support agencies. The leaders have consistent arrangements for evaluating the practitioners' performance, and regularly supervise and evaluate their work. In addition, they ensure that safe recruitment practices are in place and implemented effectively.

The leaders take full account of the views of all involved in the life of the setting. They have direct discussions with all stakeholders, such as the local authority and support organisations, to improve the provision and the children's experiences. For example, they listen carefully to the support officers about developing the planning practices, to better follow the children's interests. In addition, they act on the suggestions of the parents and carers meaningfully, such as organising a walk on a local trail to chat and socialise.

The leaders have formed a range of beneficial local partnerships, which offer the children enjoyable experiences, such as visiting a charity shop to spend money. The productive relationship with the local schools effectively prepares the children for the next stage of their education.

The leaders allocate resources wisely. The use of the budget and grants prioritising expenditure against the setting's targets is excellent. They secure sufficient qualified practitioners and enable them to attend relevant training. In addition, they fund valuable resources, such as a shelter in the outdoor area, work benches and a mud kitchen, to enrich the children's learning and play experiences.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available in the setting and from CIW's and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

This report was translated by Prysgr (Welsh to English).