



Childcare Inspection Report on

Cylch Meithrin Coed Duon

**Blackwood Community Education Centre
Cefn Road
Blackwood
NP12 1ZR**

Mae'r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

This report is also available in Welsh



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Description of the service

Cylch Meithrin Coed Duon re-registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in June 2018 to provide sessional day care for up to 19 children. It is located in a spacious demountable classroom on the site of the secondary school and community centre in Blackwood in the Caerphilly borough. Children between the ages of two and four years attend the service, which is open each weekday morning from 9.15 to 11.45. The service offers Flying Start places to eligible children and is an early year's education provider for three to four year olds. The responsible individual is Bethan Seymour and the person in charge who has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the service is Andrea Parfitt. This is a Welsh language service with Welsh and English used as appropriate.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children have good opportunities for play and learning. They are well settled and receive consistent, nurturing care from staff who have the skills, experience and knowledge to respond effectively to children's needs. The person in charge has extensive experience and receives good support from the responsible individual and officers from the local authority, including an advisory teacher. The environment has very good resources and provides stimulating opportunities for children's learning and development.

2. Improvements

This is the first inspection since the service re-registered due to a change of legal status.

Following discussions on the first day of the inspection, the person in charge immediately initiated a new system for staff to carry a key to exit the building on a lanyard at all times to improve safety for the children.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no non-compliance issues identified at this inspection.

We made some recommendations in relation to improving some care and management procedures. Further information can be found in the report and in the summary in section five.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children receive a good quality service which provides warm, nurturing care and positive experiences. They enjoy an extensive range of resources and activities which promote their all-round development. These include social, emotional, creative and language opportunities.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children make their own decisions about how they spend their time at the service. They move around the wide range of creative activities independently and their play is mostly self-directed. Children are confident to express their needs and all attempts at communication are valued and encouraged. Staff actively listen to children and when they change their minds about joining in with an activity, they receive support to make this choice. Not all children are ready to sit and join in with circle time and group activities and some children prefer to continue with painting and craft activities. Staff use gentle persuasion but respect children's choice to engage in another activity.

Children experience increased self-confidence by learning how to express their views freely.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children receive consistent, supportive care. Staff greet all children and their families individually. Children approach staff for comfort and reassurance and they receive responsive and timely attention. Children are at ease, settled, and express enjoyment and satisfaction within the environment. They feel a sense of belonging as they attend regularly, understand the daily routines and know what to expect. Children's work with their name is displayed on the walls showing they are valued and this demonstrates a sense of ownership to the service. Children are positively attached to the staff who care for them and bonds of affection are apparent. We saw children approaching staff when they needed comfort and this was provided at once. Parents told us they feel confident and reassured to leave their children.

Children's emotional well-being is enhanced by the close and consistent care provided.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are in the early stages of developing skills to cope with their feelings. They are learning how to express their emotions appropriately and receive guidance and support from staff when needed. They are mostly well settled as the child leads the settling in process and extra, shorter sessions are arranged until the child is ready to cope with separation from parents. Children value the structure of the sessions and can pre-empt activities with confidence. We saw children moving to sit on the mat at the appropriate time, waiting for circle time activities to begin. We observed children playing cooperatively with the garage, sharing cars and enjoying making car noises.

Children benefit from the support available to help them form valuable and constructive relationships.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children have good opportunities to develop and extend their interests. They are active and curious learners who enjoy exploring their environment. They have opportunities for imaginative play and receive encouragement to express themselves creatively with the role-play resources available to them. Many children value and persevere with the messy play activities such as playing with paint and water, and they show excitement and a sense of achievement. We observed children concentrating and taking their time with their mask making activities, as they were keen to take them home to their parents. Children enjoy dressing up and chose from the extensive array of costumes available to them.

Children enjoy a good variety of play and learning experiences.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children have good opportunities to develop new skills and to engage in stimulating activities. They are encouraged to follow their own interests and to be independent as far as possible. Most children are motivated to choose their own activities and direct their own play. They enjoy the opportunity to be physical and look forward to playing in the outdoor area, which is spacious and interesting and benefits from a large canopy. They take full advantage of the available space to be lively and energetic. Children are encouraged to develop self-help skills and pour their own drinks, help themselves to food, clear away after snack and put on their coats. The Welsh language is used consistently and children are developing confidence to use the language spontaneously. The service has support from a representative from a Welsh language pre-school agency who provides Welsh language support to children and staff. Parents told us that children are developing a good understanding of the language.

Children have very good opportunities to develop a good range of skills and knowledge.

2. Care and Development

Summary

There are effective systems in place to keep children safe and well. Staff have the knowledge, skills and experience to provide a good quality service which meets the needs of all children. Staff prioritise safeguarding and child protection systems are robust.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

There are effective systems in place to enable staff to monitor and record all issues which affect the health and safety of children. All staff undertake safeguarding training and this is updated regularly. The person in charge and her staff are confident to recognise any issues of concern and to refer to the appropriate authority for investigation. The safeguarding policy also refers to the Prevent strategy, which is a government initiative to protect children from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Good relationships are in place with the safeguarding officer within the local authority who is available to discuss any issue of concern and to provide advice. There is a system to record any existing injuries of children and all accidents are recorded appropriately and regularly monitored. Care and concern files are set up for children with additional learning needs and the person in charge refers children to the appropriate health agency as appropriate. The service is engaged in the Healthy Early Years scheme (HEYS) which looks at all aspects of children's health and well-being. Children benefit from a healthy snack menu which is displayed for parents to view. The service has been awarded the Healthy Snack award from the local authority. Children brush their teeth before eating as part of the Designed to Smile dental hygiene initiative. Medication forms are in use to record all medicines given to children. The person in charge amended these forms after the inspection to include parents' signature and the time of the last dose administered by parents at home. We did not see drinking water freely available to children on our first visit, although it was in place on the second day.

Staff keep children safe and well by following robust health and safety procedures.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff follow the behaviour management policy which outlines the importance of positive and effective behaviour management strategies to promote children's welfare. All staff are consistent in their approach and mindful of the age and stage of development of the children when managing behaviour issues. We observed them kneeling down to children's level and maintaining eye contact and using soft tones to distract children who were frustrated or upset. The person in charge told us that they

take time to discuss issues with children and act as positive role models. They praise children for kind and helpful actions and children value this response.

Staff manage interactions positively taking into account the need to maintain children's self-esteem.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual need?

Staff are responsive to the emotional and physical requirements of the children. We saw staff pre-empting their needs, as all key workers know their children well. Staff assess children's level of understanding, communication and language within six weeks of attending the service. All records are based on Foundation Phase Profiles with individual targets and activities set up to respond to children's learning needs. All the staff are ELKLAN practitioners, which means they receive training to promote children's communication and speech. All interventions are evaluated and further targets developed to support children's progress. Children who require additional help are referred to health and education partners as needed. The service operates an 'open door' policy and welcomes parents to visit at any time to discuss their children's development.

Staff effectively promote children's learning and development.

3. Environment

Summary

The environment is safe and inviting to children. It is well designed to provide good opportunities for children to learn and to promote their development. The premises are spacious and safe, with access to good outdoor play facilities.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

The person in charge ensures that systems are in place to maintain a safe environment. All areas and activities are risk assessed and regularly reviewed. We saw a daily checklist, which staff use each morning to monitor the facilities. All visitors sign the visitors' book to account for authorised access to the premises. The door is usually locked when children are present to prevent unauthorised persons entering or children letting themselves out. As there is only one exit, we discussed the need for all three members of staff to keep their key readily available in case the need arises to evacuate in an emergency. On the second day, all staff wore their key on a lanyard for easy access. We saw service certificates of gas, electrical and fire systems that showed all are safe and in good condition. The service does not currently use the Public Health Wales Infection Prevention audit. Nevertheless, the cleaning procedure is robust and thorough and carried out daily. Parents sign their children into the service and the person in charge ensures that the ratios of staff to children are maintained at all times.

Effective systems and regular monitoring maintain the safety of the environment.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

The facilities are attractive and welcoming and provide a rich environment for play and learning. We discussed the need for a sign outside of the service, as this would be helpful for first time visitors. The premises are divided into separate zoned areas based on the 'areas of learning' in the Foundation Phase curriculum and are spacious and well equipped. The play and learning resources engage the children's interests throughout the sessions. Activities are well planned and organised, and staff told us they rotate resources to provide variety and stimulation to children. The toilet facilities are clean and easily accessed by children. Children told us they like playing outside and enjoyed looking for spiders and their webs and we noted their delight when they got ready to go outside even though the weather was cold and uninviting.

Staff ensure the environment is maintained to a high standard to provide an interesting and stimulating service to children.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

The person in charge ensures all children have access to a wide range of good quality, developmentally appropriate play and learning resources, both inside and outdoors. Wall displays of children's work show they have access to stimulating activities, which include opportunities to learn about multi-cultural events and festivals. Children were looking forward to Chinese New Year celebrations that included making masks, eating Chinese food and dressing up. All furniture used by children is appropriate for their age and stage of development and this ensures they are comfortable whilst eating and engaged in table-top activities. Children have a coat hook in the foyer with their name and which helps them to develop a sense of belonging to the service.

The quality of resources and equipment supports the development of children's skills and knowledge.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The person in charge has extensive experience. She shares with staff and parents a sound vision and a sense of purpose that sustain improvements and good outcomes for children. There are appropriate systems in place to monitor and evaluate all procedures. Staff are valued and receive good support and developmental opportunities.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership is proactive and the service is managed effectively. There is a clear statement of purpose in place, which provides an accurate picture of the service. The person in charge has a good understanding of the requirements of the relevant childcare legislation and aims to exceed the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for registered childcare providers. Record keeping is organised and structured and we located all documents with ease. The service has recently registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and a new responsible individual is in place who is supportive and fully involved in all aspects of the service delivery. All staff have good access to training and all have undertaken first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene as well as a good range of courses to support children with additional learning and medical needs.

Effective leadership and organisation ensures all systems and procedures work to provide a high quality service and positive outcomes to children.

4.2 How effective is self-evaluation and planning for improvement?

The person in charge is committed to developing the service and working with staff, parents and the management committee to improve children's experiences. The service receives regular monitoring of policies and procedures by the local authority early years team and the appointed advisory teacher provides support and advice. The service provides parents with questionnaires to give their views on the quality of the service and key workers work with children to understand their preferences. Children have good opportunities to tell staff how they feel about activities and their ideas are valued. Plans for improvement include the acquisition of new information technology and use of this to develop children's language; using cameras with children to promote language and creative play; to continue to attend diverse training opportunities to keep up with new developments in the sector and to work with the committee to fundraise for new flooring in the outdoor area.

There are effective systems in place to support service developments.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The person in charge deploys the team effectively and all staff are clear about their responsibilities. We saw daily planning routines in place and key workers engage with children to carry out focused activities planned to support their developmental targets. Staff told us they feel supported and very well equipped to carry out their roles. There are low rates of staff absence and staff turnover and staff feel pastoral care is a priority. We examined three staff files which showed that the recruitment process is robust and all information to determine staff suitability is in place. All three staff, who are experienced practitioners, work at this service each morning and in a local, sister service each afternoon. A designated deputy supports the person in charge as needed. All staff receive annual appraisals. However, formal one to one supervision sessions do not take place regularly. These meetings should provide staff with opportunities for reflection and for the person in charge to give feedback and advice as needed. The person in charge intends to access supervision training in the near future and set up a programme of staff supervision meetings with the support of the advisory teacher. Social Care Wales' guidance "Supervising and Appraising Well" can also be used to support this.

The person in charge provides effective support and guidance to staff, but formal supervision of staff is not suitably established.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The service maintains good relationships with parents to establish trust and clear communication. There are robust procedures in place to identify the individual needs and preferences of children. The number of settling in sessions for new children is determined by the individual child's needs and parents can request additional sessions if they feel they are needed. There are well-established systems to keep parents informed of their child's well-being and development. Parents know that there is an open door policy and we viewed parents discussing issues with their child's key worker at the end of the sessions. Parents are involved in all decision making relating to their child. They told us they valued the service and that they received good information about their child daily. Parents also stated that they felt their children are well prepared for school after attending the service.

Managers encourage and maintain valuable partnerships to maximise the benefits of the service to children.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non-compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement:

- follow the Public Health Wales guidance for the prevention and control of infections;-
- provide staff with regular, formal one to one supervision sessions and
- the person in charge to attend supervision training

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, scheduled post-registration inspection. One Inspector undertook an unannounced visit to the service for five hours on the first day and for three hours on the second day.

- We observed the children and the care they received throughout the sessions. These observations included the use of our Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI) tool. This enables inspectors to observe and record life from a child's perspective and captures children's engagement and the care provided;
- we made a visual check of the premises inside and outdoors;
- we spoke to a number of children, four parents, two members of staff, the person in charge and the responsible individual;
- we looked at the information already held by us as part of the registration process and
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the statement of purpose, risk assessments, health and safety documents and the safeguarding policy. We also looked at three staff files and four children's files.

Further information about what we do is available on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Person in charge	Andrea Parfitt
Registered maximum number of places	19
Age range of children	2 – 4 years
Opening hours	9.15 to 11.45 Monday to Friday term time only
Operating Language of the service	Welsh
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	First inspection after new registration 8 June 2018
Dates of this inspection visits	5 and 6 February 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	<p>Mae'r gwasanaeth yn darparu 'Cynnig Rhagweithiol' y Gymraeg. Mae'n darparu gwasanaeth sy'n rhagweld, yn nodi ac yn diwallu anghenion y bobl sy'n defnyddio'r gwasanaeth, neu allai ddefnyddio'r gwasanaeth, o ran y Gymraeg a'i diwylliant.</p> <p>The service provides an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It provides a service that anticipates, identifies and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use, the service.</p>
Additional Information: None	