Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Ser Bach Y Cwm

Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm
Hendre Ladus
Ystradgynlais
Swansea
SA9 1SE



Date Inspection Completed

12/04/2024

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About Ser Bach Y Cwm

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Powys County Council Child Care and Play Services
Registered places	67
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	19 February 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Excellent**
Care and Development	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and Management	**Excellent**

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children are curious learners at Ser Bach Y Cwm. They feel safe, happy and valued and consistently make informed decisions and choices about what they want to do at the setting. Children have affectionate bonds of attachment with staff and each other. They engage in meaningful, play based activities that enhance their experiences and support them to learn and grow.

Staff are knowledgeable and provide a nurturing and caring atmosphere, fostering close relationships with the children ensuring they have a strong sense of belonging. Staff ensure safeguarding underpins all practice and they confidently meet children's individual needs. Staff consistently praise and reassure the children which promotes their learning and self-esteem and means their behaviour is exemplary.

Leaders provide a range of play spaces and plenty of resources to support children's learning and development. They maintain a warm and nurturing environment where children can play and learn safely. Leaders provide an exceptional range of engaging resources and equipment, and they ensure they are of excellent quality, clean and well organised.

Leaders have a strong vision for the service which they run effectively. They have an excellent range of policies and procedures which they embed throughout the setting and through their practice. Leaders develop extremely positive relationships with parents, carers and other professionals through open and honest communication.

Well-being Excellent

Children have a strong voice and thoroughly enjoy their time at Ser Bach Y Cwm. They are very settled and extremely confident expressing themselves. Children consistently chat and interact with each other and with staff. They know staff will consider and respond promptly to their wants, moods, and needs. Children have extensive opportunities to make choices and decisions about what may affect them. For example, some children chose to play outside, others engaged in a messy play activity and some children decided to play with magnetic shapes.

Children are relaxed at the setting and are clearly familiar and comfortable in their surroundings. They feel safe, happy, and valued and have a very strong sense of belonging. For example, children were extremely excited to show us the photo books and albums which reflect their experiences within the setting. They were enthusiastic as they talked about their favourite activities. This means children have a sense of pride and achievement.

Children are very confident expressing themselves and happily engaged with us during our visit. One child excitedly showed off their own lanyard that staff had provided for them, and the child went to get an old laptop from the home area and sat nearby ‘working’ alongside us. Children play extremely well together and are learning to share, co-operate and take turns. They are developing lovely friendships where they consider one another and help each other. For example, when a group of children were all playing dinosaurs, another child wanted to join in and was quickly welcomed into the activity by the other children.

Children are curious learners who clearly enjoy their play and learning. They choose activities that interest them which means they are highly motivated and thoroughly enjoy the wide range of real-life experiences. They are engaged for extended periods of time; confidently exploring the resources and using their imaginations. For example, children loved playing outside and using the water from the tray to pour onto the grass bank to make mud. They have plenty of freedom to safely explore their indoor and outdoor environments and children can choose when to relax and have quiet time.

Children have many opportunities to develop their independence skills throughout the setting. They are very independent and enjoy having a role within the setting. For example, children use the toilet by themselves, help themselves at lunch and take responsibility for their lunch bags, putting them away when they have finished. Staff encourage the children to do as much for themselves as possible in line with their age and stage of development. Children access the resources and equipment throughout the setting and some help to tidy up. They have excellent play opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem which supports their independent learning.

Care and Development Excellent

Staff ensure they keep children safe and healthy through implementing a range of effective policies and procedures within the setting. They move around the setting regularly and interact with children and support them successfully. Staff promote children's physical activity, health and well-being. For example, the outdoor equipment and resources encourage children to engage in active play regularly. Staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding procedures and their responsibilities to protect children. They are confident in the relevant processes to follow should they have any concerns. Staff accurately record children's attendance and promptly fill in accident and incident sheets and pre-existing injury forms, sharing the relevant information with parents and carers.

Staff are positive role models to the children, always speaking kindly and respectfully towards them. They provide a nurturing and caring atmosphere, and they promptly meet children's needs successfully. Staff confidently implement the behaviour management policy, by using positive reinforcement and consistently reassuring and praising the children. We heard them encourage and positively respond to the children throughout our visit. For example, we heard staff tell the children, *"That is a lovely smile! You have done it! How fantastic!"* Staff explain instructions clearly, so children know what is expected of them. This means children's behaviour is exemplary and they develop positive self-esteem. Interactions between children and adults are consistently stimulating. The children have great fun with staff, they giggled, laughed and made jokes together throughout our visit.

Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to explore and experiment independently within the environment. This means children are at the centre of their own learning and development and they are able to follow their own interests and explore their curiosity. Staff have an excellent understanding of child development and how this affects their behaviour. They are aware of children's individual needs and abilities and therefore create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where children can choose to engage in quiet or energetic activities. Staff have exemplary records in place which monitor children's progress and allows them to reflect on their own journeys. They place great emphasis on children being able to choose between the indoors and outdoors and allow them the freedom to explore and discover who they are.. Children clearly enjoy these experiences as they invited us to join them in their play.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders provide a welcoming environment that effectively meets the children's needs. They ensure staff fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children through implementing the relevant policies and procedures. Leaders successfully embed clear systems and effective measures within the setting to ensure it is safe, secure and well maintained. The doors are kept locked at all times and children, staff and visitors are routinely signed in and out of the building. Leaders provide plenty of space for children to play and learn with free flow supported between the indoor and outdoor spaces. They ensure staff supervise children well and fully recognise and understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable risks for the ages and abilities of the children. Leaders have comprehensive risk assessments in place that identify and proactively manage the potential risks effectively. They review them regularly and take appropriate action if necessary. Leaders implement highly effective cleaning routines that reflect excellent hygiene practices which minimise the risks to children's health and safety. They complete regular fire drills and maintain the relevant records to ensure all staff and children can evacuate the building in an emergency. Leaders complete daily and weekly checks of the premises, and all maintenance checks for the building and appliances are up to date.

Leaders make excellent use of the space available within the setting. Children have ample space to play indoors and outdoors, and they are confident moving around freely and choosing where they want to play. Leaders ensure the free flow environment supports children's individual needs and enhances their curiosity and interests. The layout is well thought out and provides excellent learning spaces for the children to safely explore and engage in a variety of opportunities. They use neutral colours and minimal displays throughout the environment which creates a sense of calmness. Displays are meaningful and reflect children's time in the setting which means they feel valued with a strong sense of pride and achievement. The extensive outdoor space is secure and promotes children's imagination and creativity as they use this stimulating, rich learning area regularly.

Leaders ensure children have access to an abundance of resources and equipment that suit their age and stage of development. They create an exciting play environment for the children with a variety of resources available to stimulate and interest them. Leaders provide resources that spark exploration and encourage the children to play imaginatively in line with their interests and curiosity. For example, children thoroughly enjoy playing with the magnetic resources as they are able to build, design and create their own projects. Leaders provide quality furniture and equipment that is suitable for the developmental needs of the children. For example, there is appropriate furniture for children to sit at with ease to undertake tabletop activities and to eat their lunch and snacks. The toilets are child-sized and support children to develop their independence skills.

Leadership and Management — Excellent

Leaders are organised and run their service effectively. They have a strong vision that they share successfully with their staff, parents, carers and outside agencies. Leaders ensure staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they work well together as a team. Leaders ensure staff embed the policies and procedures throughout the setting, through collecting, recording and maintaining all the required information in relation to children. Staff speak highly of each other and have a strong work ethic. Leaders have a detailed statement of purpose that accurately reflects the service and ensures parents and carers are making fully informed decisions about their children's care. They record children's preferences in detail, and leaders have the appropriate parental permissions in place.

Leaders recognise the importance of self-evaluation, and they have an effective system in place for monitoring and reviewing the service. They produce a purposeful quality of care report which looks at what works well and reflects how they plan effectively for improvement. They maintain excellent systems in order to inform their quality of care review. For example, they actively seek feedback from staff, parents, carers and children as well as outside agencies. Leaders are extremely approachable and welcome any ideas or suggestions to improve their practice. They submit the Self-Assessment of Service (SASS) as required and engage positively with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Leaders ensure staff have the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively care for children through following excellent recruitment procedures to safeguard children. They support staff in understanding their roles and responsibilities through regular appraisals and supervisions that are central to their practice. Leaders have high expectations and are motivated to lead staff well. This ensures staff are energetic and confident in their roles and are therefore able to meet children's needs. Leaders pride themselves on providing a reliable service and deploy staff effectively to ensure they always maintain ratios.

Leaders promote positive partnerships with parents and carers, as well as other professionals. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive and feel their children are extremely well cared for. Leaders maintain inclusive communication systems and strong links within the community. They develop meaningful relationships with the local authority and other agencies, and leaders work closely with the school. This ensures successful transitions for the children which promotes positive outcomes and meets children's individual needs.

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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