Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Bobl Bach Pre-School

Building No. 2, Pant Primary School, Heol-y-Bryniau, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2AD

07708510666

Date(s) of inspection visit(s):

The inspection visit took place on 05/09/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Child Care and Play Services
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	20
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture, or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Excellent
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children have a strong voice and know that their attempts at communication are recognised by staff. They are extremely happy and really enjoy their time at the setting, engaging meaningfully in the excellent opportunities for play and learning. Children develop important skills within a very nurturing setting. Children interact well and are developing close bonds with their peers and staff.

Staff are extremely professional and work seamlessly together as part of a team. They are knowledgeable about individual children and their families. Staff are confident about how to keep children safe and promote their health and development. They provide a large variety of interesting and fun activities, to support children's learning.

The environment is clean, welcoming, and well organised, with best use made of the space available. There is a very good selection of very well-maintained resources both inside and outside.

Staff follow procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable, completing risk assessments and daily checks consistently.

The leadership and management of the setting is strong. Leaders at this service are enthusiastic and committed to providing high quality childcare. They have extremely thorough processes in place to ensure that staff are fully involved in working together to provide excellent care for the children. There is a clear culture of continuous improvement and building strong partnerships with parents and other agencies to support children.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children have a strong voice and have many opportunities to make choices. They decide what they would like to play with from the numerous activities on offer. Children choose freely from an extensive range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating resources which promote their all-round development. Children can follow their own interests with confidence and choose to play inside or outside. For example, children really enjoyed playing with the garage and cars, while another took a toy outside to play in the water tray and then the mud kitchen. A child made it clear that they wanted to join in an activity at the dough table and staff recognised this, calling them to sit with them and help them make stars.

Children are happy, relaxed, and confident. Some children who only started at the setting recently, have already developed strong attachments with their key staff, seeking them out for comfort or to celebrate success. Children show by their behaviour they have strong bonds of trust with staff. For example, a child took a member of staff to sit and look at a book, playing with the jungle animals related to the story. Children are also comfortable to approach other familiar people when they need help. They feel secure by knowing the daily routines and confidently respond to directions from staff. For example, joining in the 'feelings' activity at circle time and snack time routine. Children playing alone are content and are soon joined by other children or staff in their games.

Children are learning to behave very well. They use good manners that they have successfully learned, respecting each other and staff. Children are learning to share and take turns. On the rare occasion it is required, children respond positively to gentle reminders from staff to 'wait a little minute' to use a particular resource, to slow down or to use kind hands. Children sit happily together and chat to each other and staff, listening to others talking about subjects that are important to them, for example what they are going to do on the weekend or their favourite food.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop new skills with the extensive play and learning experiences available. They are curious and engaged learners who value the chance to explore the environment. Children are very engaged in their chosen play and respond well as they are supported by staff to think and extend their learning in any activity in which they are interested. They need little encouragement to make food in the mud kitchen or pour water on flowers from the watering can. Other children squealed with laughter as they took part in an impromptu story of the 'Three Little Pigs' with staff, hiding in the outdoor frame from the 'big bad wolf.'

Children are developing very well and have many opportunities to develop skills for independence. They are given time to do things for themselves such as taking off their coats and eating their

snack. Children enjoy helping to tidy up and are becoming proficient in using the toilet with minimal supervision.

Care & Development — Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles within the setting. They are effective in keeping children safe and healthy because they confidently follow the setting's policies and procedures. Staff are noticeably confident about their responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns and meeting children's medical needs. They ensure that there are up to date and detailed health-care plans, play plans and personal risk assessments in place for children, where necessary. Staff are aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Additional Learning Needs legislation. They supervise children very well and implement safe hygiene procedures. Staff provide healthy food and drinks and understand the policies relating to providing food safely. They keep clear records of accidents and incidents, and these are monitored regularly to identify any trends, which need to be addressed.

Staff manage interactions extremely well. They have a sound understanding of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. Staff implement the behaviour management policy effectively, consistently using positive language and praise, which enhances children's well-being. They offer simple, clear explanations, and encourage kind behaviour such as 'kind hands'. Staff provide care in a calm and patient manner. They are nurturing, smiling and warm in their interactions. Staff are good role models, for example, using good manners, apologising if anything negative occurs and listening to other staff. They encourage children to be kind to each other, to help tidy up, and they sit with them for their snack to promote their social skills. Staff encourage children to join others to play. For example, a child was building with blocks, skilfully using tongs to pick up and place the blocks on top of each other. Another child stood looking, and both children easily took turns to build the tower bigger, as a member of staff explained the benefits of working together.

Staff are extremely motivated, and keen to promote children's development and support them to reach their full potential. They operate a key worker system, but all staff know the children's individual needs very well. They monitor children's progress effectively, conducting regular observations and using developmental progress tracking systems to identify areas where additional support may be required. Staff communicate with each other consistently and are aware of their individual roles in delivering nurturing, responsive care. Staff attend to children's personal needs promptly and discretely. They set up an exceptionally good range of interesting activities based on what they know children like and adapt this to accommodate their interests on the day. Staff have undertaken very many training courses, which allows them to support the children confidently. They deal with children's interactions sensitively and with exceptional skill. Staff kneel to the children's level and use calm voices to guide them. Staff use the Welsh language during activities and children engage well with this.

Environment — Good

Leaders provide a safe, well-maintained, and welcoming environment. They have detailed risk assessments for all areas of the environment and many activities, and these are reviewed on a regular basis. They ensure that annual safety and maintenance checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a secure system for entry to the setting, and staff ensure that all visitors are signed into the service. There are health and safety reminders around the setting, such as posters outlining fire evacuation and hygiene procedures. Staff complete daily checklists to identify any matters that need addressing such as health, safety, and hygiene. They have established good relationships with maintenance personnel who attend to general maintenance promptly.

Leaders have organised the space well and with children's needs at the forefront of the ideas. They provide inviting, well-equipped areas that are spacious, welcoming, and homely. Areas are light and decorated in neutral colours with many natural materials, providing a calm ambiance. They have designed the environment so that children have the option to play in the outdoor area when they choose to. The outside area provides interesting facilities for children to play in the fresh air. Staff thoroughly clean tables before they are used for children to eat their snack. Leaders ensure that toilet and nappy changing facilities are suitably equipped and provide children with easy access to toilet facilities which promotes their independence. Staff have access to a small 'office' where they store records and conduct any confidential business. They can store their belongings but it is not large enough for staff to meet or take breaks.

Leaders ensure that there are a good variety of resources to stimulate the children's interest and imagination. Play resources are varied and highly suitable for the age of the children. Staff use many resources to reflect the real world, such as pots and pans and home items. Learning areas are changed regularly to maintain children's interest and extend their skills. Staff maintain a rich environment for play and learning. The resources are easily accessible to children as they are visible and stored at their level. This ensures that children can always access developmentally appropriate resources that promote their curiosity.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders are exceptionally skilled and experienced, providing very strong leadership. There is a clear and inspirational vision for the setting outlined in the Statement of Purpose. There is a strong ethos of child-centred care, and this is evident when you speak to leaders and staff. Leaders are very aware of national priorities and developments in childcare. They have developed detailed policies and procedures, which they update when required. Staff maintain daily records such as attendance, accidents, and incidents well and leaders monitor these effectively.

Leaders have a robust system to review the quality of the service they offer. They consult effectively with a wide range of relevant parties who contribute to an effective self-evaluation process and create a culture of continuous improvement. They fully consider and respond to parent, staff, and children's requests. Leaders set high expectations of themselves and staff and involve staff in setting achievable targets. Leaders produce a comprehensive report of their annual service review, including their plans for future improvements.

Leaders have effective systems in place to recruit, induct, and employ staff. They keep organised records that show that all the required checks and information required by regulations, is sought prior to staff being employed at the setting. Daily records such as registers and staff rotas show that a suitable number of staff are employed for the numbers of children attending. Leaders promote a strong culture of continuous development. Staff have opportunities to complete an extensive range of training that supports them to fulfil their role to a high standard. All staff hold a childcare qualification and have current certificates in in first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene. Staff told us they felt supported to do their jobs on a daily basis and they receive regular one to one supervision. Staff have pride in their roles and work seamlessly as a team.

Leaders have established systems to enable them to work in close partnerships with parents. They seek detailed information about their children's needs and preferences, and they keep parents well informed via detailed newsletters, emails, notices on display in the setting, secure social media, and daily conversations. Parents tell CIW that they are very happy with how the setting communicates with them and keeps them updated regarding their child. Leaders and staff have established links with a wide variety of external organisations and individuals such as the local authority, health visitors, medical professionals, and childcare support organisations. They work together to support children to reach their full potential.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

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.

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

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