Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Engine House

Pant & Dowlais Boys & Girls Club, Engine House, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 3HA

01685375318

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visits for this service took place between 28/08/2025 and 02/09/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	The Pant and Dowlais Boys & Girls Club
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	30
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider is not meeting the Welsh language and culture needs of people and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children are happy, engaged and enjoy their time at the setting. They are keen to make decisions about their play and what activities they take part in. Children are listened to, and their choices are respected. They feel safe and confidently move around areas to join activities they like. Children interact well with each other and staff.

Leaders build extremely positive relationships with the children and have a comprehensive understanding of their needs. They identify their role in keeping children safe and are improving some areas to further ensure this. Staff promote positive outcomes for all children through their knowledge and by providing a nurturing and child-led setting.

Leaders ensure the premises are in the main, safe, and secure and are further updating risk assessments. They provide areas that meet the needs of the children and ensure that they have access to an extensive range of resources and equipment to meet their interests.

Leaders show great commitment in their role and have a clear vision for the setting. They understand there is improvement required to fully meet the regulations and National Minimum Standards. Leaders are establishing a procedure to consider improvement through their annual review process. They have built a motivated staff team who work well together. Leaders are developing useful links with outside agencies and are planning to seek support from them.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children's voice is at the heart of the setting. They have many opportunities to make choices and decisions about what affects them. Children know staff will listen to them as they are actively encouraged to express themselves. They move freely between different activities and areas. Some children choose to participate in a task such as craft while others play independently on various gaming equipment or join a group to play football.

Children feel happy and secure at the setting. They enter confidently, with smiles on their faces. Children are greeted by staff that are very familiar to them and that they trust, chatting to them and enjoying friendly banter. They have a good sense of belonging because staff know them well and show a genuine interest in them. As a result, children feel secure and valued.

Children benefit from the strong relationships with staff. They thoroughly enjoy the play and learning opportunities, and many are self-motivated in the activities they choose. They enjoy participating in a range of activities, including the television, electronic games, pool table, table tennis, and numerous crafts. Many children join with staff in a game of football, or air hockey.

Children understand the expectations for their behaviour and the 'rules' of the club. They listen well to instruction, such as to move off the stairs and put their rubbish in the recycling containers. Children are happy to help with tasks such as tidying up and are content to wait their turn to be served at the café. Many children make friendships and play well with each other, sharing and negotiating what they want to watch on the television.

Children show interest in what they are doing, are keen to be independent and have opportunities to develop different skills. Children have opportunities to try to do things independently before staff intervene to offer support. They confidently move around the play areas, accessing resources to support their interests.

Care & Development — Adequate

Staff understand their roles and follow most procedures to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. In the main, there are systems in place which are designed to promote the health and safety of children. However, more could be done to ensure staff fully understand and implement all policies and procedures of the setting. For example, there is a policy regarding use of mobile phones. However, staff did not always follow this procedure. Leaders have since held a discussion with staff using their personal phones at the setting and are taking steps to review the policy and monitor that it is being followed as a matter of urgency. There is a safeguarding policy in place that clearly outlines the procedures for making referrals of concerns for children to an appropriate agency if needed. Staff have completed training is safeguarding, giving them the knowledge and skills to identify any issues and take appropriate action. However, children use their own mobile phones and can access the Wi-Fi at the setting. Leaders do not have a policy in place regarding children's use of their own phones or electronic devices which could be a safeguarding consideration. Staff record accidents, incidents, and existing injuries well. Leaders review these as they happen and monthly to monitor any trends or patterns that need consideration. Staff promote healthy eating by providing healthy food options such as wraps and fresh fruit in the café. Children can also choose to buy other foods, such as chips and sausage.

Staff have good interactions with children. They know them well, as they have worked with many of them for some time. Staff support children to manage their behaviour and boost their self-esteem. Staff encourage the children with plenty of praise for even small achievements. They remind them of simple rules such as sitting down whilst eating and not congregating on the stairs. Staff know when to stand back and give the children space to try things for themselves. They are appropriate role models because they interact well, joining in games with them if asked and offering support if they can see they would benefit from it. Staff make time to talk with children, engaging them in conversations about what they are doing, showing genuine interest, and valuing what they say.

Staff work well together to support children in their chosen activity and meet their individual needs. They know what the children like and encourage them to join in activities. For example, asking if anybody wanted a game of football, or to play an electronic football game. Staff also understand that some children may prefer to sit and relax with peers and gave them space to do this, while supervising the play areas closely. They consult with children regularly to ensure that resources and activities are interesting to them and varied. Leaders monitor that they provide resources that are age appropriate, for example, electronic games and films. They are reviewing the safeguarding policy to show how they do this daily.

Environment — Adequate

Leaders ensure the premises is secure, and no one can gain access without authorisation. The setting has CCTV throughout the building, but there is no policy outlining how this is used and who has access to it. They have good processes in place to monitor that the building is maintained appropriately such as arranging for electrical, fire and gas system checks to be carried out routinely. Leaders spoke confidently about how they ensure that the environment is safe and have some written risk assessments in place. However, risk assessments are not detailed and do not cover matters such as transporting children in a vehicle, children accessing the landing area or access to the upper floor. Staff conduct fire drills to ensure staff and children know how to exit the premises quickly and safely in an emergency. Leaders discussed how they are going to review the regularity of these drills and improve the records they keep, to highlight if any improvements are required.

Leaders and staff provide a welcoming environment for children. Children have sole access to plenty of space that provides them with good opportunities for their play. This includes a large indoor football pitch. The setting does not have a secure outside play space, but staff take them regularly to a nearby park. During the school holidays, children are taken to off-site excursions in the minibus. Children have areas where they can relax and have quiet time. There are sufficient toilets and wash hand basins readily accessible to all children. Children access toilets designated for boys and girls but in the same toilet area. They can also access a ‘disabled toilet’ if they choose. Leaders are drawing up a policy showing they have considered the risks associated with a unisex toilet area. Leaders have plenty of office space where they can store confidential information and hold meetings with staff and parents if required. There is another office downstairs where staff access.

Children have access to furniture, equipment, toys, and materials that are suitable and appropriate for their needs. Staff audit and replace resources regularly and consult with children prior to purchasing new resources to ensure they meet their interests. Children use furniture and equipment such as a table tennis table, pool table and lots more. These are sturdy and well maintained. Leaders provide a wide range of resources which children can access easily, are plentiful and of good quality. Leaders are knowledgeable about the law regarding the use of car seats and tell us the children attending do not require car seats to be transported in the minibus due to their height and weight. They are drawing up a policy regarding transporting children and will be including the safe use of car seats. They are in the process of seeking written permission from parents/carers for them to transport children in their vehicle.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders are experienced in providing a service for children and young people. They are clearly passionate about providing a much needed and good quality setting. They have recently registered to provide care for seven- to twelve-year-olds, and the strength of leadership varies. Leaders understand they must do more to adhere to the National Minimum Standards (NMS), regulations, and to follow their own policies. They are committed to doing this. There is a statement of purpose, which in the main provides a good overview of the setting, although further clarity is needed. The settings policies are generally clear and contain the appropriate information. Leaders are further reviewing these to ensure they reflect the actual practice and to further clarify specific details. For example, use of the internet and how they ensure electronic resources are age appropriate. Staff maintain most daily records well. However, staff attendance records do not always reflect the actual times staff care for children and accident/incident records are not always signed by parents/carers.

Leaders are developing a process to monitor the quality of the setting and to ensure a culture of continuous improvement. They are aware of the requirement to carry out a formal self-evaluation of the setting on at least an annual basis and have set up systems to gather information throughout the year. For example, leaders are committed to including children in the review process by establishing a children's 'committee', which will actively involve children in the quality review process. They are aware that a report of their annual review will need to be undertaken and propose to include a development plan, outlining what improvements are required and how they expect to achieve them. Leaders were eager to act following this inspection and have already taken some steps to secure improvement. There is a clear complaints policy, and a 'suggestion' box is positioned so it is easily accessible for children to pass on their views confidentially. Leaders check this regularly and consider any information shared via this method.

Leaders and staff are generally well organised, and they provided information easily when requested. They have not employed any new staff since the setting has been registered with CIW. However, staff records evidenced that they had not undertaken all the required pre-employment checks on staff. Leaders were not confident in the regulations relating to safe recruitment, although, following discussion, they agreed to review staff files immediately and ensure any gaps in information were addressed. They confirmed that they would complete all required checks on any new staff employed. Therefore, we have not issued a priority action notice on this occasion but are noting the matter as an Area for Improvement and expect the provider to act. Leaders understand the requirement to ensure there are always an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff. They strive to do this, and nearly all staff hold a play work qualification, as well as current first aid and safeguarding training certificates. Staff are offered support and guidance by leaders daily, and they have formal one to one supervision occasionally. Leaders are considering making these sessions more regular and have plans in place to carry out annual appraisals.

Leaders have good partnerships with parents and carers. They require them to provide a suitable

range of information for the children before they attend so they can provide appropriate care. Leaders have developed useful relationships with other relevant professionals and organisations such as the local authority and funding bodies. They are members of an organisation that gives advice and support for out of school care providers.

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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Children may not be safeguarded because the provider has not carried out all the checks for staff, as required by the regulations.	28/08/25

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)
Standard 24 - Safety	Increase the regularity of fire drills and ensure records clearly reflect the outcome of the drill.
Standard 1 - Information	Update the statement of purpose with information outlined in the National Minimum Standards.
Standard 24 - Safety	Complete more detailed written risk assessments for the premises, security, use of the toilets, transporting children in a vehicle, off-site visits and the school run.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure parents consistently sign and date accident/incident records and receive a copy.
Standard 20 - Child protection	Seek advice and draw up a policy regarding managing the risks of allowing children to use their own mobile phones or electronic equipment at the setting.
Standard 20 - Child protection	Ensure staff follow the policy regarding use of their personal mobile phones at the setting.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure records clearly identify the times that staff are actually caring for children.

Best Practice

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Recommendation(s)
Review policies to ensure they reflect current practice.

Consider drawing up a policy outlining how CCTV is used at the setting.

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