Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Playworks Childcare Limited Oakdale

Maes y Garn Road, Oakdale, Blackwood, NP12 0NA

02920864780

www.playworks-childcare.co.uk

The inspection visits for this service took place between 20/04/2026 and 27/04/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Playworks Childcare Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	40
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 provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children are happy and settled and have fun at the setting. Their views and interests are respected, and they have plenty of choice about how they spend their time. Children can choose from a good range of play and learning opportunities and often go outdoors. They interact well with their friends and form good relationships with staff. Children's independence is promoted at the setting.

Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They are warm and responsive and provide safe, nurturing care. Staff know children well and ensure they provide care that meets individual children's varying needs.

The pack-away setting operates within a shared school environment, limiting control over premises. Staff conduct thorough daily checks, respond promptly to issues, and maintain safety. The environment is spacious and engaging, with varied resources. Despite challenges, staff provide a

safe, stimulating space and children enjoy diverse indoor and outdoor play opportunities.

Leaders create a welcoming setting with strong organisational support and regulatory understanding. However, communication between head office and the setting can be inconsistent, and as a result some risk assessments are outdated. Leaders carry out self-evaluation annually and produce a quality of care review. Parents value the highly caring service.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have many opportunities to make choices at the setting. They can choose how they spend their time and they move freely around the indoor space selecting what to play with from the varied options at their disposal. They make choices from a wide variety of snack options and frequently decide to play outside when light and weather permits. Children feel comfortable expressing themselves and talking to staff. They are confident to ask for help and enjoy chatting about things that interest them. Children's voice is strong at the setting, they know their opinions are valued and their interests taken into account, as staff ensure there are resources available that match their interests.

Children are calm, happy and have a lot of fun at the setting. They build strong bonds with staff who are familiar to them and who know them well. For example, children talk and laugh with staff whilst they carry out craft activities together at the table, creating a family feel. Children are familiar with the routines and expectations; this adds to their sense of belonging. For example, we saw how children gladly went to the snack area to start choosing what they would have that day.

Children have opportunities to play with other age groups and classes at the setting. This allows them to maintain current friendships whilst also forming new ones. Children with different needs and ages play contentedly with one another and alongside each other. They share resources and treat one another with respect. For example, children co-operate together kindly to ensure everyone has enough space to join the craft or activity tables. Children respond quickly to staff requests; they treat staff and resources with respect.

Children are engaged and interested in their play and learning. They eagerly get involved with the opportunities for child led free play both on their own and in groups. For example, some children concentrate as they draw pictures with chalk whilst others build structures from construction toys. Children work together as a team to do puzzles, and another group of children enjoy challenging themselves on the climbing equipment.

Children's independence skills are developing well. They can manage their own time at the setting which enables them to enhance their independence. They manage their own bags and coats and practice skills such as; finding equipment, asking staff for help, joining in with groups and making new friendships outside of their own year group. Children can lead their own play and develop their own ideas. For example, after carrying out a painting and printing activity with staff, children thought of new ways to use the paint to create different art effects and were proud to show their work.

Care & Development — Good

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibility to keep children safe. They have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues, and their own duty to report any concerns. Staff encourage good health and hygiene at the setting. For example, they ensure children wash their hands before eating and ensure the area where children eat is suitably cleaned. Staff ensure that children are provided with a good standard and range of healthy options at snack time and support them with healthy eating habits. Children are provided with a water bottle of their own at the setting ensuring they have drinking water at all times. They are encouraged to personalise this by decorating it, this enhances their sense of belonging. Staff keep good records of accidents and incidents, and ensure parents receive copies. Leaders monitor these records regularly to ensure they are alert to any patterns or trends. Staff accurately record arrival and departure times in the daily registers of children's attendance. They ensure all children have access to the outdoor play areas as much as possible during their time at the setting. This offers children the benefits of physical exercise and fresh air.

Staff are consistently warm, patient and kind in their interactions with the children. Their responsive, nurturing approach means children feel very comfortable and relaxed and this sets the tone for interactions between them. Staff have a good understanding of children's development, varying needs and how these can impact on behaviour. They are observant about when children need support with their interactions and intervene appropriately. Staff are good role models and use plenty of praise and encouragement. They treat children with respect and dignity, chatting with them easily, laughing together with them as they play and supporting a positive and fun filled atmosphere.

Staff know children and their individual needs very well. They naturally adjust the care and the behaviour strategies they use to suit each child. Children with additional needs are well supported. Strong systems mean information regarding children's needs and their care is readily available for staff on file. Staff naturally extend the play and learning of children as they chat to them about what they are doing and join in when appropriate. For example, we saw how children enjoyed playing 'sticky bat and ball' with staff, naturally learning about turn taking, fairness and good humour, before later organising themselves to play with each other.

Environment — Good

The setting is a pack away setting based within the main hall of the school building. Whilst staff have exclusive access to the hall and library, other parts of the school site are in use by other organisations and the school's cleaning staff. Staff keep a record of any visitors to the rooms used by the setting. The Responsible Individual told us that routine maintenance checks for the building are undertaken by the Local Authority. However the setting does not keep copies of these safety certificates on file and therefore could not provide assurances these checks had been done. Staff are vigilant in carrying out environmental checks daily before the session starts to check the area is suitable to provide care for children. They take immediate action if they find issues. Staff carry out regular fire drills ensuring children know what to do in an emergency.

The environment provides a spacious area for children to play and unwind. The main room is bright, light and airy. There is plenty of space for children to participate in various table activities without feeling cramped. There is also a generous amount of open floor space that children use creatively for different games and there is a relaxing area with cushions. Additionally, there is a smaller room available, which we saw being used for snack on the day of inspection. The facility has an adequate number of clean and well-maintained toilets for the children, although they cannot access them independently since they are not located in an area exclusively designated for the club. Outdoors, children have access to a large, attractive, and interesting play area. This offers ample space for exercise, opportunities to take risks and overcome physical challenges as well as outdoor space for children to relax in. Staff accompany the children when they are using the outdoor space.

There is a wide selection of varied toys and resources, ensuring all children can find many things to interest them. Despite the extra work of being a pack away setting, staff are conscientious and go to great efforts to plan and put out a very plentiful, diverse and engaging range of activities, materials and toys. This ensures children are very content and engaged throughout the session. Resources are clean, safe, and appropriate for the various age groups that attend the setting. Staff regularly check resources for safety and dispose of any resources which are broken or in poor condition.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders of the setting are committed to providing a welcoming and friendly setting where children with a variety of ages and needs have positive play and learning experiences. Leaders at the setting benefit from being part of the larger company which has strong systems and processes. For example, the company has a range of well-developed policies and management and recruitment processes and support in place. The Responsible Individuals have a clear understanding of their regulatory requirements and liaise well with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), submitting all appropriate notifications and information when needed. However, communication systems are not always effective in ensuring all necessary information is relayed between the leaders at head office and those at the setting. Outcomes for children require improvement because the risk assessments for the security of children on site had not been reviewed or updated to reflect the presence of other organisations on site. Therefore the risks of children leaving the site undetected had not been identified and as far as possible reduced. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders carry out satisfactory self-evaluation. They obtain feedback from parents and children through questionnaires. They use this information and staff observations to produce a quality of care report annually.

Leaders undertake relevant checks to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and ensure that staff's Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) are current. They keep staff files up to date and make sure they contain all the necessary information. However, the National Minimum Standards for Full Day Care are not being met as leaders do not ensure that there are a sufficient proportion of staff with suitable Playwork qualifications working at the setting daily. Leaders have systems in place to provide staff, including the person in charge, with regular formal supervision and appraisals. Records of these meetings are maintained and outline the topics discussed. However, they do not always include sufficient detail to give a clear understanding of staff views or to fully capture the specific issues raised and actions agreed.

Leaders and staff have built positive connections with parents at the club. Parents have expressed how they appreciate the service which is both extremely useful and one their children enjoy attending. They value the warmth and care of staff.

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 be at risk of leaving the site undetected as the risk assessment had not been updated to reflect the situation at the setting.	20/04/26

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	Evidence that leaders are assured of the safety of the setting for children by ensuring up to date copies of Gas and Electrical Safety Certificates are kept on file.
Standard 14 - Organisation	Improve systems for communication between the Person in Charge and Responsible Individual to ensure that there are regular, robust systems in place for raising issues and clear records of issues raised are kept along with actions agreed.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure staff have the appropriate Playwork training for their roles.

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)
Ensure records of all supervision sessions contain sufficient detail of discussions, the 'voice' of the person being supervised and actions agreed. Hold supervision sessions face to face as often as possible.

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