Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Estyn
Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Little Rascals Pre-School

Cwm Golau, Integrated Children's Centre
Duffryn Road
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4BJ

Date of inspection: November 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

About Little Rascals Pre-School

Name of setting	Little Rascals Pre-School
Category of care provided	Full Daycare
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Angela Samuel
Person in charge	Sarah Mathias
Number of places	32
Age range of children	2 – 5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	5
Number of children who receive funding for early education	5
Opening days / times	9.30 – 4.00 Monday to Friday
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	26 March 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	September 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	14/11/2023

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Good**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	
Care and development	**Good**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that planned learning and play experiences are more relevant to children's interests and preferences

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Most children make appropriate choices and decisions about their play. They engage in tasks promptly, demonstrating a willingness to play and learn. They move freely around the areas, choosing where and what to play with confidence, such as moving between playing with the light table indoors and the garden area outside. They sustain interest for extended periods of time. Most children enjoy attending and cope well with separating from their parents and carers as they arrive at the setting. Most are familiar with the routines of the setting and feel safe and valued in the care of practitioners with whom they have positive relationships. They develop confidence through opportunities to make their own decisions about toys and activities. They show clear emotional attachment to practitioners and reach out to them for comfort when upset or tired.

Most children confidently communicate their needs and opinions, for example when they are asked if they would like their shoes back on. Most children make independent choices well and many choose to play outdoors, which they can access freely at any time. Most children wash their hands independently before snack time and line up ready to go to the woodland area. During snack time, they enjoy chatting with practitioners and each other about food they like. Many children are beginning to understand the needs of others, co-operate well in their play and share resources appropriately with some support. For example, when two children want the same bike, one patiently waits for the other to use it first.

Most children explore their environment confidently. They engage well in activities and express their enjoyment of them enthusiastically, such as when they dance and

move to music. Most children enjoy the experience of the woodland area in all weather conditions. They use their imagination well, for example to rock baby dolls when they feel they are upset. Children enjoy opportunities to develop their independence, doing things for themselves successfully and in their own time. For example, most children pour their own drink at snack time and hand out serving plates to each other.

Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners communicate with children in a warm, friendly manner and interact well with them during their play activities. They are positive role models for children and provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop their social and communication skills. For example, practitioners model and explain the importance of sharing when playing alongside children. They also sit and chat with them during snack time and when appropriate they become actively involved in children's free play. Practitioners are sensitive to the needs of children and intervene effectively to prevent any disagreement. They give plenty of encouragement and use praise meaningfully when children are kind, share resources and take turns. For example, when a child helps to tidy up, they receive praise for co-operating and helping. Practitioners know their children exceptionally well and encourage children to develop a sense of pride in their achievements. Practitioners openly discuss children's needs and recognise if a child's behaviour is out of character.

Practitioners have suitable arrangements in place to keep children healthy. They offer healthy snacks, milk, or water to drink and encourage children to wash their hands, helping to develop an understanding of personal hygiene well. Practitioners clean surfaces before and after use following good infection control procedures. They encourage children to be active and to play outdoors in the fresh air.

Practitioners keep children safe through implementing suitable procedures such as completing daily checks of the environment, accident logs and administering first aid. They conduct and record termly fire drills, which helps children and practitioners to become familiar with the procedure to follow if there is a need to evacuate the premises. The setting's arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners are caring and kind towards the children and help them to feel valued. They meet children's individual needs effectively, including those identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). Practitioners have an effective working relationship with outside agencies to offer support to help them support children to develop and learn to the best of their abilities. There is a clear system is in place to support children with ALN and a dedicated team of practitioners to support those with social

communication difficulties. Practitioners track children's progress appropriately and use information from observations to help children develop their learning effectively. Practitioners provide appropriate resources and free choice activities. They organise interesting and exciting opportunities, which strengthen children's curiosity and imagination.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn through play and exploration. They provide them with access to a wide range of stimulating activities in the indoor and outdoor areas, that promote their learning and development well. Many resources are interesting and encourage children to explore and be curious. For example, they find out how to make cups of tea by combining water and tea bags. However, practitioners do not always notice and respond to what captures children's interests and what they prefer to play with well enough. As a result, they do not always provide resources that enable children to engage fully in leading their own learning.

Practitioners allow children sufficient time to become engrossed in what they are doing. They are good language role models, introducing new vocabulary and asking children simple questions to promote their thinking skills. For example, practitioners support children to find ways of using blocks to create buildings.

Practitioners plan worthwhile activities to promote children's communication skills. They encourage them to respond to open-ended questions and ask them to share their views and opinions as they play. Practitioners provide children with a cosy reading area, where they can relax and enjoy listening to stories alone or with a practitioner. They also provide a suitable range of opportunities for children to engage in mark making activities, such as creating Rangoli patterns and using chalks on a large board outside.

There are beneficial opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills, such as using natural materials to count and recognise numerals around them. Practitioners encourage children to use mathematical language as they explore activities, such as talking about heavy blocks and full and half full teapots of water.

Practitioners place useful questions alongside activities to challenge children to solve problems and think critically about what they do, such as asking them how to use musical instruments to make loud and quiet sounds. They also provide children with a wide range of resources to promote their information and communication technology skills (ICT), such as a large tablet computer, walkie talkies and a record player. This also helps to develop their communication skills well.

There are valuable opportunities for children to be physically active. For example, balance beams and tunnels encourage children to negotiate their way through and practitioner provide music for them to move and dance to. Practitioners also plan beneficial opportunities for children to use tweezers, scoop with spoons and press small doughs into dough. These activities develop their fine motor skills well.

Practitioners encourage children to speak Welsh and provide beneficial opportunities to develop these skills through their play. For example, they encourage children to count objects and name colours in their play. They support them to sing simple songs and rhymes and choose snack items in Welsh.

Practitioners plan worthwhile opportunities for children to enjoy and experience the natural world. They encourage children to plant seeds, feed birds, and make homemade binoculars to observe them. They promote children's understanding of cultural diversity well through the celebration of festivals and by providing appropriate resources, such as dolls and books, to promote children's understanding of other people's lives and beliefs. Practitioners plan activities that promote the cultural heritage of Wales appropriately by celebrating St David's Day and having resources such as flags, costumes, and books in the learning environment.

Practitioners are developing effective ways to make regular and useful observations of children. They use the information effectively to evaluate how well they are progressing in their learning and development. This also helps them to identify children's next steps in learning clearly and to share this information with parents and carers successfully.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They have effective systems in place, including risk assessments and daily health and safety checks for all areas, which reduce or eliminate potential hazards. There is a suitable system to manage access to the setting and they record details of all visitors and arrival and departure times for children and staff consistently. The setting is well maintained and clean, with effective routines to help prevent cross contamination, for example cleaning and sanitising the resources and equipment.

Leaders provide children with a natural and calm environment. There are opportunities for children to be active and independent indoors and outdoors. The premises are welcoming and friendly, providing suitable space and facilities to meet the needs of children. The environment is decorated with displays, which celebrate religious festivals, and real-life scenes such as an autumnal forest walk backdrop. The setting provides direct outside access for all age groups, which is used appropriately to enhance children's learning and to encourage them to be active. The outdoor environment provides children with a wide range of exciting opportunities and areas that support them to learn about the world around them, including a forest area.

The indoor environment provides children with good quality resources, which supports their needs and stage of development well. Leaders provide a suitable range of resources that help children to develop a range of skills, such as providing many natural materials for them to manipulate and use which supports their sensory development effectively. For example, there are pumpkin seeds and fresh flowers in the clay making area and shells, pebbles, fruit, and vegetable for mark making. Children benefit from a large selection of books both in Welsh and English. Role play areas such as the home corner offer real home life resources such as crockery and

cutlery, telephone, hairbrushes, and jewellery. Practitioners store toys and resources safely and on floor level, which allows children to access them independently.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting based on providing a child centred environment, where all children can learn and develop holistically. They share this vison effectively and practitioners feel comfortable to share concerns and ideas to improve the setting. Practitioners work together closely and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders place a strong emphasis on staff well-being, which creates a happy working environment.

Leaders have worthwhile self-evaluation processes that link effectively to the setting's development plans. These plans identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement well. The leader sets appropriate actions that bring about the desired improvements and uses grants effectively to enhance provision. For example, the setting has developed the outside area to include a sheltered space where children can develop their creative skills successfully.

There is a clear statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the setting. Leaders have developed an effective range of policies, which are shared appropriately with parents and carers. There are a sufficient number of suitably qualified practitioners at the setting. Leaders undertake staff appraisals annually and clear targets result in improvements to practice and provision. Leaders take advantage of a suitable range of professional development opportunities to improve the skills and knowledge of practitioners. For example, practitioners have made appropriate changes to the planning and assessment procedures after attending training on the implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

The setting has developed strong links with a range of worthwhile partners. Practitioners keep parents and carers informed of what their children are learning and how well they are doing. They use a social media app to share photographs and key information with parents and carers regularly, as well as suggesting how they can support learning at home.

Leaders make good use of advice and guidance from partners, such as the local authority's advisory teacher. This has resulted in positive changes to the provision and learning environment, for example by creating a more homely and welcoming learning environments for children to explore.

The setting has beneficial links with the local community. Visitors to the setting include the police and fire services. In addition, children visit the local supermarket and post office and go on walks to observe seasonal a change around them. These activities enhance children's learning and sense of belonging well. The setting ensures there are effective transition arrangements for children to move on to the next stage of their education.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (http://careinspectorate.wales) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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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

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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