Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Rachael's Playhouse Hirwaun Primary

Hirwaun Primary School
Glanant Street Hirwaun
Aberdare
CF44 9NF



Date Inspection Completed

05/06/2024

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About Rachael's Playhouse Hirwaun Primary

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Rachael's Playhouse Limited
Registered places	30
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	First inspection since registration
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	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.

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 have extensive opportunities to make choices and decisions and as a result, they have a very strong voice. They are extremely happy, settled and interactions between children are exemplary. Children follow their own interests and are developing independence and co-operation skills exceptionally well.

Staff have a very thorough understanding of their role and fully implement policies and procedures to promote healthy lifestyles, safety, and personal well-being. They consistently promote positive outcomes for all children through their knowledge, providing a highly nurturing and child-led setting. Staff plan and assess purposefully and effectively, and continually ensure that children's skills, interests, and curiosities are developed further. Staff show a genuine passion and commitment to their roles and responsibilities.

People who run the setting ensure the premises are secure, and very well maintained. They provide a range of play spaces to encourage children to play and learn, and these promote children's independence. People who run the setting ensure children have access to an extensive and exciting range of natural and purposeful resources and equipment to nurture children's overall developmental skills.

People who run the setting have an excellent vision and run a very effective and well organised setting. They manage recruitment and staff extremely well, effectively supporting everyone to do their best, working as a coherent team to meet their high expectations. People who run the setting maintain successful links with outside agencies and develop very positive partnerships with parents who are extremely happy with the care their children receive.

Well-being	**Excellent**

Children are very confident communicators and have a strong voice at the setting. They have excellent opportunities to contribute their ideas when planning the activities on offer and what they want to learn. For example, the children were an integral part of planning what they wanted in the garden area and are part of continuously evaluating this area and planning its development. Children know that their opinions and interests are highly valued and acted upon and as a result children confidently access resources from other areas to use in their play.

Children are extremely happy and engaged and have a strong sense of belonging. When they arrive at the setting, they go straight to play in one of the areas and help themselves to resources of interest. Children feel valued and have a strong sense of pride. For example, they smiled when staff gave them praise for laying the table during snack time. This leads to a very strong feeling of self-esteem among children. They have formed close relationships with their peers and staff and are familiar with all routines as well as the ethos of the setting.

Interactions are excellent. Children interact exceptionally well with staff who are very familiar to them. Nearly all children interact superbly with each other and have wonderful relationships. Children chat happily and intently around the table during snack time. They respond positively to staff who encourage them to try new foods and congratulate each other when doing so. Interactions between children are also very positive during play and they build respectful relationships. For example, a child approaches another child to use the microphone, they discuss how it will be shared between them and are able to share the resource successfully without adult support.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning opportunities and are self-motivated in the activities they choose. They have great fun as they play happily together, creating balance trails with blocks. They shriek with excitement and congratulate each other for reaching the end of the trail. Children are inquisitive and keen to show adults what they are learning. For example, a child wanted to show us their car and how it moves, whilst another tells us to hold a shell against our ear to hear the sea. Younger children smile calmly as they enjoy massaging hands and feet during their spa session and relax copying yoga poses.

Children have exemplary opportunities to develop their independence. They lay the table for snack using tablecloths, real crockery and are supported to cut their own fruit and vegetables. They identify risks effectively when taking part in risky play activities and explain clearly how they can keep themselves safe. For example, when learning to climb the small step ladder, they know to take their time and hold on to the rail. They access the toilet facilities freely, wash their hands independently and capably tidy up after play. They naturally try to do things independently before staff intervene, such as washing paint from their hands or wearing warm clothing before going outside. They confidently move around the learning areas, accessing resources to support their interests.

Care and Development — Excellent

Staff fully understand and implement policies to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. They complete paediatric first aid training, enabling them to deal with minor accidents confidently. Staff promote healthy eating by preparing a daily healthy snack, with options such as milk, coconut water and water to drink. They hold relevant food hygiene training and follow correct cleaning procedures as part of the infection control process to help keep children healthy and safe. Staff are skilled in the way they teach children how to keep safe and in considering the wellbeing of others whilst taking risks in their play. For example, when children use the tyres in the outside area staff support them in their decision on how and where to roll them. Staff have a thorough understanding of child protection procedures and responded well to scenarios discussed during the inspection. They are aware of the safeguarding policy and their duty to report concerns to the safeguarding officer. Staff's understanding of safeguarding is further supported by a collaborative web platform which they access to support their understanding and decision making. They ensure children are familiar with fire evacuation procedures by completing regular fire drills which are timed, dated, and evaluated. As a result, children's safety and health is always promoted.

Staff fully understand the behaviour management policy and consistently implement the strategies and the agreed five step procedure. As a result of staff's consistent approach, children's behaviour and interactions are very strong, and many are able to successfully manage their own conflict with little adult support. Staff regularly offer praise, encouragement, and positive reinforcement to children for good behaviour and accomplishing their goals. They are excellent role models and encourage good manners and remind children to say *'plîs'* and '*diolch'* as a matter of course. Staff create extremely positive relationships with children in their care. As children play, staff show a great interest in their activities and discuss tasks in a calm and very supportive manner. For example, they use phrases such as *"can my friend have a go please"* and *"it would be fantastic if you could share that exciting thing with your friend"*. Children respond by using the same kind language with each other, resulting in positive interactions between children. Interactions are consistently warm, engaging and demonstrate sensitive and genuine understanding and kindness towards children.

Staff ensure children are at the centre of their own learning. They know the children extremely well and adapt activities effectively to meet their individual needs and interests. For example, when children showed an interest in waterfalls, staff responded and made water a focus of their learning. From this, they re-created and researched waterfalls from around the world and involved families in home links project about water. Staff assess children's needs and progress purposefully. They observe them regularly to identify their strengths and their areas for improvement effectively. The staff collaborate and use this information purposefully, using this information to plan the next steps in individual children's learning and development as well as the learning experiences they provide. This has a very positive effect on children's progress and well-being. Staff fully support and provide for

children’s additional needs. They take purposeful action in a timely manner and work with outside agencies. Staff take on board advice and make effective use of strategies to support children. Most staff are skilful in developing children’s Welsh language using incidental Welsh consistently throughout the day. They also sing in Welsh and introduce new vocabulary such as colours and numbers.

Environment — Excellent

People who run the setting have comprehensive systems and procedures in place to ensure the environment is safe and secure. The premises is a new build located on the grounds of a primary school and it is light, airy and well maintained. People who run the setting keep a record of visitors who enter via the setting’s dedicated main door. They work with the school to complete all maintenance work on the building and to service utilities and equipment. Staff ensure that medication and cleaning materials are stored safely out of the reach of children. People who run the setting ensure consistent cleaning routines which result in an extremely clean, and well-maintained environment. They prioritise assessing risks in the indoor and outdoor areas and specific activities to make sure children are safe. In doing so they consider the benefits of taking safe risks. This has a positive effect on children’s development by enabling them to take risks and engage in new experiences.

People who run the setting ensure the suitability of the environment for children and adults with an office for confidential conversations and separate kitchen area. They provide good facilities for children to use the toilet and handwashing basins independently and these ensure and respect children’s privacy. Staff organise the indoor and outdoor areas very well with interesting zones for play and learning. Inside, children move from one activity to another effectively and between the indoor and the small outdoor area. Children also benefit from access to the garden area, and the shared multipurpose playground which is accessed regularly. Staff ensure that the environment is welcoming and interesting and celebrates children’s creativity, family backgrounds and their local area. For example, they display photos of children’s trips to their local area as part of their ‘cynefin’ display. Family photos and children’s individual artwork are also displayed purposefully. This creates an exceptional sense of self-worth and belonging among children.

Staff provide stimulating play and learning areas, which include quiet areas and role-play areas, opportunities for children to investigate and inquire as well as activities that have a very strong effect on their imagination. For example, children take risks and experience opportunities to care for real objects and develop their skills during role-play in the home corner using ‘real objects’ such as cups, saucers, and tea pots. They use these along with home grown produce from their garden such as herbs. Staff ensure that an extensive selection of interesting and exciting resources and equipment are available to children. The outdoor area provides excellent opportunities for children to learn about sustainability by growing their own vegetables and using re-purposed materials to grow seeds .

Leadership and Management — Excellent

People who run the setting have a strong vision that they effectively share with others. Their passion and ethos are fully understood by all staff and completely embedded within the setting. During the inspection the people who run the setting updated their Statement of Purpose to reflect the positive changes made and the service provided. They have policies and procedures in place, and they continually strive and are committed to delivering a quality service.

The self-evaluation process is exemplary. People who run the setting are reflective and identify areas of strengths and improvements, by considering the views of staff, parents, and children. They ensure this is a continuous process of identifying the setting's strong aspects and those that need to be developed further. People who run the setting set and evaluate appropriate priorities and accurately identify targets for the setting in their improvement plans. They have a clear vision for the identified priorities and discussed these during the inspection. An example of one of these priorities is to support staff improve their timely interactions with children as they play and learn. This is to allow children time for independent learning as well as learning with appropriate support. People who run the setting prepare a clear action plan which has measurable targets and timelines in order to drive these improvements.

People who run the setting manage staff effectively and follow robust recruitment procedures. They ensure staff complete mandatory qualifications and hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. People who run the setting carry out regular supervision and appraisal meetings and plan for staff development. All staff we spoke with said they are extremely happy working at the setting, feel valued and very supported by approachable leaders. As a result, staff are confident and extremely passionate about their work and fully value opportunities to develop their skills to benefit the children in their care.

Partnerships are excellent. People who run the setting have positive links with a wide range of professionals, schools, and other stakeholders. They work with parents when considering children's next steps and include parents in setting targets for children. People who run the setting ensure all communication with parents is valuable in order to promote positive outcomes for children. For example, staff document children's achievements using photos and observations and write a love letter to parents to document their child's attainments. Parents' voice is also an integral part of the setting, and they are invited to many events as well as parents' evenings. People who run the setting invite parents to together time, during together time, parents take part in activities with the children. As a result, partnerships are strong, and these benefit the children that attend. Feedback received from parents was overwhelmingly positive and complimentary about the setting. All were very happy with the way their child has settled at the setting and the progress they are making. Many commented on the knowledgeable, helpful, and supportive staff as well as the experiences

and activities on offer. One parent commented, *“amazing setting, fantastic staff, outstanding activities and all based on love!”*

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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Date Published 02/07/2024

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