

Playworks Marlborough



Marlborough Primary School , Marlborough Road , Cardiff , CF23 5BU



02920864780

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): 14/07/2025, 21/07/2025

Service Information:

Operated by: Playworks Childcare Limited

Care Type: Children's Day Care

Registered places: 60

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

Good



Environment

Good



Leadership & Management

Good

Summary:

Children are happy and feel valued. They form warm relationships and confidently make choices. They express themselves, receive encouragement, and develop independence in a supportive, nurturing environment that fosters their well-being and sense of belonging.

Staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They promote positive behaviour and engage children in age-appropriate activities, participating alongside them.

Leaders maintain a safe, clean, and secure environment. Children access a variety of toys, resources, and play experiences that capture their interests. Leaders ensure children can relax, play, and develop their independence.

Leaders provide staff with effective policies, regularly evaluate the service, and support staff

development, ensuring staff feel confident in their roles. Improvements are required to ensure there is always enough suitably qualified staff to care for children. Leaders and staff build strong partnerships with parents and the school.

Findings:



Well-being

Good

Nearly all children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. They move freely between indoor and outdoor play spaces, deciding for themselves which activities to join. For example, some children choose to play football while others prefer indoor games. They take an active role in planning activities and giving input on new purchases for the setting. This approach empowers them to exercise autonomy while at the setting. Nearly all children confidently express themselves, knowing that staff will consider and respect their preferences. For instance, we saw children returning for more food at mealtimes and independently using the drinks dispenser throughout the session.

Nearly all children are very happy and settled at the setting. They are familiar with routines such as the collection arrangements at the end of the school day. This helps children to predict what will happen next, making them feel safe and secure. Children feel valued and have a strong sense of belonging. They clearly enjoy being in the company of each other, forming warm and affectionate friendships and developing secure relationships with staff. Children told us how they thoroughly enjoy attending the setting, participating in the many fun activities such as football, drawing, playdough and chatting with their friends. Children receive lots of encouragement and praise from staff for their efforts, giving them the confidence to play and learn.

Nearly all children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They participate in a variety of beneficial play opportunities, which support their development, learning and imagination. Children and staff immerse themselves in activities together. For example, when playing cricket in a small group and when cheering each other on during a skipping challenge. Children happily wait their turn, share resources and treat each other and resources with respect.

Children are developing their independence skills. For example, during mealtimes where children serve themselves food and pour their own drinks and when accessing the bathroom. Children tidy away after themselves such as, scraping their own plates after eating and putting away toys and resources after playing. This promotes their self-help skills and builds their self-esteem.



Care & Development

Good

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of children. The setting has a range of beneficial policies and procedures that guide staff and outline expectations. Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures to follow. They are aware of their duty to report any concerns and are confident in the steps to take should this be required. Staff implement appropriate procedures to support children when completing and monitoring accident, incident and pre-existing injury forms. These are shared with parents in a timely manner. There is a suitable policy for staff to follow when administering medication and appropriate records are maintained in accordance with the policy.

The staff provide children with healthy well-balanced meals before and after school and ensure they have access to water to stay hydrated. Staff ensure mealtimes are relaxed where children sit together chatting with their friends. Staff hold the required food hygiene certificate and understand the necessary steps to follow when preparing food for children. The Food Standards Agency has registered the setting. Staff follow robust procedures to ensure the safety of children with allergies and intolerances. For instance, ensuring specific cooking items are used and stored appropriately when preparing food for children with allergies to minimise the potential of cross contamination. Staff gather key health information before children begin at the setting and put beneficial plans in place to meet their individual needs while they attend the setting.

Staff actively promote positive interactions by using effective strategies in line with their behaviour management policy. They model appropriate behaviour and give clear instructions, explaining to children when their actions are inappropriate. Staff provide a range of age-appropriate play activities, and children freely choose how to spend their time in the setting. They include children when planning for activities following their interests. Staff respect children's preferences, encourage independence, and engage with them during activities. However, staff do not use incidental Welsh.



Environment

Good

Leaders ensure staff follow suitable procedures to maintain an environment which is safe, clean, and secure. Visitors, staff, and children are accurately recorded on arrival and when leaving the building. Staff and children benefit from regular fire evacuation drills, including reverse drills ensuring they are familiar with how to leave and re-enter the building safely in an emergency. A third party completes the maintenance and safety checks for the building. However, leaders do not have adequate procedures in place to ensure they can access these records in a timely manner for auditing purposes. Leaders have developed a range of beneficial risk assessments regarding the environment and some activities. In addition, there is a dedicated notice board which displays essential information about daily operations and emergency health and safety procedures for staff to follow. This includes a daily checklist of the environment for staff to use to eliminate any possible risks to children's safety.

The service is based in a primary school, using the main hall and playground as its activity space. The welcoming environment maintains good indoor and outdoor facilities. The playground is directly accessible from the main hall, enabling children to access the outdoors independently. Children are keen to play outdoors and have daily access to this extensive playground, which hosts large climbing apparatus along with ample space for children to engage in activities such as football, cricket and skipping. This provides opportunities for children to engage in large physical play. The space also offers benches and smaller, quieter areas where children spend time chatting with their friends.

The main hall offers a variety of activities, such as board games and craft activities. Resources on offer are of good quality and rotated daily to provide a wide range of experiences and promote multicultural awareness. The space also offers areas where children can read or relax quietly. The children eat their meals in the hall on appropriately sized fold-away tables and chairs. After use, staff clear these away to create a large space for children, should they not be able to access the outside space during poor weather conditions. Children access the bathroom, which is situated just outside of the main hall, fostering their independence. However, staff do not consistently monitor children's access to the bathroom to be able to account for them.



Leadership & Management

Good

The leadership and management of the service is effective. The statement of purpose provides parents with accurate information about how the service runs. Effective policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure the smooth running of the service. Recording systems for essential records are completed to a good standard including children's contracts. Leaders do not always keep Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) informed of events set out in regulations at the correct times to ensure children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

Leaders implement a meaningful self-evaluation process and plan effectively for improvement. They gather regular feedback from children, staff and parents and this information is carefully considered to identify priorities for improvement and shape the service to meet the needs of the service users. Leaders submit their Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) when requested by CIW. They ensure the required ratio of adults to children is always maintained. However, outcomes for children require improvement because leaders do not always ensure there is enough suitably qualified staff to care for children, and we expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders ensure staff files are well organised, contain the required information and demonstrate robust recruitment procedures are followed. They carry out suitable inductions, and regular supervisions and appraisals take place to support staff in their professional development. Leaders further strengthen this approach by holding regular team meetings, which keep staff informed of relevant updates and actively seek their input. Staff told us they feel supported in their roles and are confident to share their views. Leaders ensure staff keep up to date with their mandatory training such as safeguarding, paediatric first aid and food safety.

Leaders and staff build strong partnerships with parents to consistently meet children's individual needs. At collection, they give parents a brief update about their child's experience at the setting. Any information which requires further discussion is either communicated via private messages or a telephone call is held. Parents we spoke to were highly complimentary regarding the setting. They told us how they appreciate the strong communication links and how their children thoroughly enjoy attending the setting. Leaders actively maintain strong working links with the school where the service is based. This positively contributes to the smooth running of the setting and ensures any potential operational issues are addressed promptly.

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's health, welfare and safety may be at risk if there is not a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff looking after children at all times. | 14/07/25 |

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 14 - Organisation | Strengthen operational procedures to support children accessing the bathroom independently. |
| Standard 24 - Safety | Strengthen procedures for accessing and auditing maintenance and safety records. |
| Standard 21 - Notifications of significant events | Ensure Care Inspectorate Wales is promptly notified of any changes that may impact children's welfare. |

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) |
|---|
| Actively promote the use of the Welsh language and culture. |

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