Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

# Inspection Report

## S4YC @ Rocking Horse Day Nursery

Rocking Horse Day Nursery, 21 Main Road Broughton, Chester, CH4 0NP

07960189165

www.s4yc.co.uk

**The inspection visit took place on 08/10/2025**

## Service Information:

| | |
|---|---|
| Operated by: | S4YC Ltd |
| Care Type: | Children's Day Care |
| Registered places: | 70 |
| Main language(s): | English |
| Flying Start service: | Yes |
| 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 | Excellent |
| Care & Development | Excellent |
| Environment | Excellent |
| Leadership & Management | Excellent |

## Summary:

Children's wellbeing is at the heart of the setting. They have a strong voice and are consistently given meaningful opportunities to make choices. Children are happy and form strong friendships and trusting relationships with staff who know them well and provide consistent care, helping them feel safe and valued. Children interact brilliantly and cooperate consistently well with others. They fully flourish and engage in their play and learning experiences as they are interesting and stimulating. Children have excellent opportunities, time and encouragement to do things for themselves and develop their independence.

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are good role models, manage interactions skilfully and have a sound understanding of child development. Staff are kind, caring, patient and work hard to ensure children feel valued and enjoy their time at the setting. Staff are motivated and dedicated to effectively promoting children's development and provide an excellent range of interesting activities in response to what they know children like.

Leaders provide an environment which is safe, secure and extremely well maintained. They organise the space to a very high standard and ensure it is really welcoming and child friendly. The environment is stimulating, with exciting areas for children to explore and an abundance of

resources available.

Leaders have a clear vision and are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities which ensures they fully comply with regulations and consistently exceed national minimum standards (NMS). Leaders complete and implement effective and meaningful self-evaluation of the setting, which results in effective planning for improvement. Leaders foster a strong sense of commitment and collaboration within the team. The robust recruitment, supervision and appraisals ensure staff feel valued and respected. Leaders work well with outside agencies, which enables them to tailor the care to support children's individual needs successfully. Good relationships are developed with parents and the community which has a positive impact on the children.

# Findings:

## Well-being — Excellent

Children's wellbeing is at the heart of the setting, and this is clearly reflected in practice. They have a strong voice and develop a positive sense of belonging and value. Children are consistently given meaningful opportunities to make choices and lead their play, based on what interests them. For example, when wanting leaves to put in the water they were able to take a pan and collect them from the nearby tree. Children communicate with confidence, clearly expressing their needs and preferences using verbal and nonverbal cues. For example, when a child gestures to show a staff member they would like some help on the tyres, it is responded to effectively.

Children settle quickly and feel comfortable in the environment. They are happy and feel safe in the care of the staff as their needs are fully recognised and catered for. Children form strong, trusting relationships with staff who know them well and provide consistent care, helping them feel safe and valued. Children develop strong friendships and express enjoyment as they play together. For example, there was lots of laughter as children splashed in the water outside and watched as it hit the floor. Children are clear on the embedded routines and follow them successfully. This helps them feel secure and know what is happening next. For example, some children did not want to come inside for snack but were reassured they could return later, which they were happy about.

Children interact brilliantly and cooperate consistently well with others as they are inspired and motivated to do so by staff. They play cooperatively and show strong social skills across all age groups. Children show enjoyment as they chat to their friends during their play and routines such as snack time. They are polite and learn to use their manners, saying please and thank you at appropriate times. Children's positive behaviour reflects their emotional awareness and an understanding of how to work and play well with others. For example, they understand when they need to share items such as making sure there is enough playdough for other children who want to play. Children show respect for the environment and resources. They help tidy items away and play with them appropriately.

Children fully engage in their play and learning experiences as they are interesting and stimulating. They flourish as they learn a range of skills during their play. Children have resourceful opportunities to self-direct their own play and learning and this is facilitated well by staff. For example, when children see a spider in the tree, a staff member joins them and they discuss what they can see, adding to their awe and wonder about the world around them. Children eagerly invite us into their play and are excited to share their experiences, evidencing how happy they are.

Children have excellent opportunities, time and encouragement to do things for themselves and develop their independence. For example, during lunch time children are given the time and resources to serve themselves. They freely and confidently move around the environment,

choosing where and what they want to play with. For example, children moved around the range of activities available over the two play areas outside. Children confidently use facilities such as handwashing and toilets independently and they are encouraged to do things such as serve and feed themselves.

## Care & Development — Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. The setting has an extensive range of policies, procedures and documentation in place which staff consistently follow when carrying out their roles. There is a comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure in place. Staff confidently demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities and commitment to dealing with safeguarding matters. Staff are attentive and organise snack and lunch time to ensure it is enjoyable, sociable and safe. Staff promote children's independence and skills development by encouraging them to feed and serve themselves. They follow and promote strong hygiene practices. For example, they actively encourage children to independently wash their hands before eating, and following outdoor play and messy activities, instilling these good practices from an early age. Staff are confident when recording, maintaining, and reviewing a range of records including, accident, incident, existing injuries and medication logs.

Staff are good role models and manage interactions skilfully and consistently. They have a sound understanding of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. Staff are kind, caring, patient and work hard to ensure children feel valued and enjoy their time at the setting. They encourage children to express their feelings and emotions and are extremely responsive and nurturing, meaning children approach them with great ease. The setting follows the Tiny Tums accreditation to offer a variety of healthy and well-balanced meals and snacks which are freshly prepared. There are thorough procedures in place for catering for children with allergies, intolerances, and dietary preferences. For example, any child with allergies is supervised when eating by a designated member of staff wearing a red apron, their food is served on a red plate, and they have a place mat containing information of the allergy and the food they can eat. Before giving the child their food, the designated member of staff reads aloud the information on the place mat to the other staff and describes the food being served to the child.

Staff are motivated and dedicated to effectively promote children's development. They make beneficial observations of children during activities and support them to further develop their skills by setting targets, which are reviewed regularly. Staff set up an excellent range of interesting activities in response to what they know children like. They sensitively engage with children to challenge their thinking, extending their enjoyment and learning. They are committed to providing a wide range of play and learning activities through purposeful planning, which ensures they successfully follow the children's lead and needs. For example, in the Rainbows room a wide range of activities were on offer ranging from outside painting, water play, playdough, to staff reading books to those children that prefer a quieter environment. Music and songs are used regularly to successfully develop children's language, physical development and well-being. For example, younger children sang along and made the movements to 'Wind the bobbin up' whilst waiting for their dessert, two-year olds enjoyed dancing and skipping to music and older children enjoyed playing a game and counting to music.

Staff create a relaxed and friendly feel in the nursery where children confidently play energetically or quietly. Staff have exemplary procedures in place to support children with additional needs and promote positive outcomes for children. They support children's language skills, including some basic Welsh words and phrases.

## Environment — Excellent

Leaders provide an environment which is safe, secure and extremely well maintained. The doors are always locked, and children, staff and visitors are routinely and accurately signed in and out of the building. Leaders ensure staff supervise children well and they understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable risks for the ages, needs and abilities of children they are caring for. Leaders practice fire drills frequently and maintain detailed records to ensure all staff and children can evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency. Room leaders complete daily checks of the rooms and outside areas, and all maintenance checks are up to date.

Leaders organise the space to a very high standard and with children's needs at the forefront. They provide an environment that is extremely welcoming and child friendly, with exciting areas for children to explore and develop their awe and wonder. Staff ensure play areas are organised in a highly effective manner to stimulate children's curiosity, exploration, and development. They set up areas both indoors and outdoors for each age group with invitations to play, and the children are excited by and engaged with their environment. A purposeful range of resources, including real life and natural resources are stored at child height to ensure easy access for children of all ages. The low-level storage and resources support children's independence, enabling them to follow their interests and direct their own play effectively. This is further enhanced in the preschool room which has full open access to the outdoors and the Rainbows room which has direct access to their designated outside area. Each age group, including those under the age of two, has a designated outdoor area that has been thoughtfully planned to enhance children's learning, development and well-being. They have facilities such as a covered area, huts to provide shelter and shade, and natural grassed areas. Staff ensure resources in the outdoor area are of excellent quality and are set up to promote children's curiosity and exploration. For example, children have access to water play, painting, loose parts play, planting areas, balancing apparatus and a selection of wheeled toys.

Leaders create an extremely stimulating and exciting play environment for the children with an abundance of resources available. They provide quality furniture and resources that are suitable for the developmental needs of all children. For example, there is appropriate furniture for children of all ages to sit at ease to undertake tabletop activities and eat their snacks/lunch. Staff supervise children to use the toilet facilities independently or offer appropriate support for younger children and those who are toilet training. There are sufficient and appropriate nappy changing facilities on each floor of the premises. Leaders ensure the environment provides excellent and challenging opportunities for children to explore and develop their creativity, physical skills and independence.

## Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders have a clear vision that focuses closely on establishing and maintaining the well-being and progress of every child. They are committed to effectively managing the setting and providing the best care possible, with the help of a wider team within the company. All paperwork is well organised, so information is easy to find. Policies and procedures are consistently reviewed to ensure they meet current guidance and reflect the care provided. Leaders have created an informative statement of purpose that accurately reflects the setting, so parents can decide if it is the right care for their child. Leaders are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities which ensures they fully comply with regulations and consistently exceed National Minimum Standards (NMS).

Leaders complete and implement effective and meaningful self-evaluation of the setting and the care provided. Planning for improvement is effective and has a positive impact. Leaders ensure staff play an active role in the process by having development plans for each room. These are created by the staff which helps them feel valued and have ownership on what is happening in the area they work. Leaders ensure they successfully gather the views of staff, children, parents and outside agencies to support them in identifying possible areas of improvement. They ensure training staff have attended is evaluated, shared with others and meaningful changes are planned and implemented wherever needed.

Leaders foster a strong sense of commitment and collaboration within the team. They value and respect all practitioners and encourage them to contribute to many important aspects of the setting's work. Staff supervisions and appraisals are completed regularly and are effective in ensuring all staff feel supported and able to develop in their roles. Leaders have robust recruitment and induction procedures in place to make sure staff are suitable to care for children and understand the running and ethos of the setting. Leaders regularly and effectively review resources they provide. They ensure they are of a good quality and enhance children's experiences successfully with natural and authentic items that support them to be imaginative and creative in their play.

Leaders work well with outside agencies, which benefits the care children receive. This includes receiving purposeful advice and support from appropriate outside agencies, which enables them to tailor the care to support children's individual needs successfully. Staff develop a close relationship with parents and carers, who feel welcomed at the setting. They consistently share information about their child's day, experiences and progress electronically and verbally. Leaders and staff understand the benefits of creating links with the local community. This includes with local schools to aid transitions and visiting local places of interest such as the parks and library, so children develop a sense of belonging in the community.

# 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.

**CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.**

**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) |
|---|---|
| | No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection |

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