

Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY362567
Inspection date	09/12/2008
Inspector	Valerie Block
Setting address	30a Church road, Harrington, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 5PT
Telephone number	01946 834439
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Little Stars (Workington) Limited is run by a Board of Directors. It opened in 2007 and operates from a building on the main street in Harrington, near to Workington, Cumbria. The children have use of a main playroom for children aged from two to eight years and a baby play room for children aged under two years. Children also have use of an adjacent resource play area and sleep room. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.00 throughout the year, apart from one week over the Christmas period and bank holidays. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The ground floor premises have ramped access.

There are currently 70 children aged from six months to eight years on roll. The setting does not provide places for children receiving funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with additional needs.

The setting employs five staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The setting generally meets the unique needs of the children who are well-cared-for and are making overall satisfactory progress towards their early learning goals: however, there are some weaknesses in observation, assessment and planning methods as well as risk assessment. There are systems in place to ensure the setting is welcoming and inclusive to everyone and partnership with parents is in place although partnerships with other providers are not yet fully established. There is a sound capacity and motivation to self-evaluate and improve, using information from staff and parents as well as advisors and attending regular training.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further improve staff's understanding of the early learning goals, the balance of adult-led and child-led activities as well as teaching methods to improve experiences that are appropriate to each child's stage of development and learning
- further develop systems to make use of parental information, staff observations and to continue to make links with other providers to improve assessment so clarifying each child's starting points and next steps in learning to ensure their individual needs are met.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a record of each outing's risk assessment clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom. date of review and action taken following a review or incident. (documentation)

31/12/2008

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The strengths and weaknesses of the setting are in the main known and lead to appropriate improvement action plans, for example, the manager is looking to improve her staff's understanding of the early learning goals and the observation, assessment, planning cycle. Steps also have been taken to provide ramped access to the premises to ensure access for all. Actions made at the last inspection have been met promptly ensuring that children's needs are met. Clear and comprehensive policies that are seen to be in daily practice are shared with parents and reviewed regularly. Parents interviewed show a good level of satisfaction with the care and education their children receive at the setting.

Children are well safeguarded as there is a robust recruitment and vetting system in place. Also staff meet qualification criteria, have regular training and understand their responsibilities to keep children safe as they understand child protection protocols. Risk assessments about the premises are well written and reviewed regularly. All necessary steps are taken to ensure children's safety and security. However, risk assessments for individual trips off the premises, although considered through staff discussion, have not been fully completed.

There is regular verbal communication with parents and communication that is further assisted by a written diary that parents are invited to also complete. Although parents discuss children's needs with the staff, they are not fully included in observation, assessment and planning systems to address children's future learning needs or to clearly identify what children can already do. There are systems to exchange information with other education and care providers although this is not always effective. Children with additional needs receive necessary support and are included in the life of the setting as the staff work cooperatively with relevant agencies and attend any necessary training to ensure children's individual needs are met.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The manager has a good understanding of the early learning goals and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), however not all of the staff have this level of understanding at present. Children's future learning needs and children's starting points are not always clearly known to staff. Information from staff observation is not always used robustly to define children's starting points and next steps, making it difficult to fully address children's interests and unique needs in activity planning. Children make sufficient progress and enjoy exploring their environment helping themselves to a good amount of interesting accessible play opportunities that they

enjoy. Children enjoy exploring the water and sand trays using a good range of tools and natural materials to investigate the properties of these materials. Children take responsibility and become independent as they return tools to their appropriate places. Words associated with water and sand are near to the areas of play so that staff can extend the children's vocabulary and point to the word. Children's learning is limited as there is a predominance of child-directed play. Although staff support children at their play there is a weakness in teaching in that staff do not use questions to best advantage to extend children's thinking and learning. Children broadly are making progress across all areas of learning, however there are gaps in children's learning about using mathematical methods to solve practical problems and using phonic knowledge: linking sounds to letters and sounding out words.

Outdoor play is used effectively to encourage children's physical exercise and to allow children scope to enjoy learning through play in the fresh air. Children in good weather have the choice of playing inside or outside and the outdoor area is organised to give children a range of learning opportunities. Children learn about their community as the staff take them out on short walks to local parks and the sea shore.

Children and babies are confident, well settled and respond well to staff who are very caring and warm to the children in their care. Older children confidently visit the toilet independently and know they need to wash their hands and flush the toilet so developing self-care skills and preventing ill health. Children are talked to about going outside on walks and staff point out the dangers, explaining to children how to keep themselves safe. The children learn about diversity well as they celebrate festivals such as Diwali. This along with the good range of resources and pictures displayed around the setting that reflect positive images help children learn to respect others. Children behave well and are cooperative with one another acknowledging the importance of sharing toys. Staff praise children and give good role models for polite behaviour. The educational programme helps children to build skills for the future, for example as children begin to understand how simple programmable toys and cameras work.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.