

Little Foxes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 227241
Inspection date 12/10/2009
Inspector Bernadina Laverty

Setting address Fox Hollies Park Pavilion, Gospel Lane, Acocks Green,
Birmingham, WEST MIDLANDS, B27 7EG

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

Little Foxes Playgroup opened in 1998. It operates from one main playroom in Fox Hollies Pavilion, Acocks Green, Birmingham. Access is via a small step. The playgroup serves the local area. The Playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions last from 9.30am to 11.45am Monday to Friday. The playgroup has suitable systems in place to provide care for children with English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children under eight years may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 23 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group.

There are nine practitioners who work with the children. All have Early Years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Whilst children have settled quickly into this welcoming setting, weaknesses in safeguarding and organisation put children at risk. Confusion over who is the nominated person and the lack of a line of accountability has resulted in breaches to welfare requirements. Documentation relating to the welfare requirements is mostly in place, although the validity of policies and procedures is questionable because it is difficult to establish who has overall responsibility for this group. Incomplete learning and development documentation makes it difficult to track and assess children's overall progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or fully support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Resources and equipment are appropriate to support children's learning. The current management team demonstrate a genuine commitment to improve outcomes for children and have been proactive in seeking advice and guidance in order to move the group forward.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so and ensure committee members are given full
- 19/10/2009

- information and guidance on their roles and responsibilities (Suitable people; also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register)
- notify Ofsted about all significant changes and/or events as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of occurrence (Suitable people; also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 19/10/2009
 - ensure the safeguarding children policy and procedure is implemented effectively. The provider must ensure that all members of staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedure (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare; also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 12/11/2009
 - increase staff knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) to enable them to confidently plan, deliver and assess activities in all areas of children's learning needs and ensure children's records indicate clear evidence of progression for all children and that all areas of learning are sufficiently covered (Organisation) 12/11/2009
 - plan and organise documentation and systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs (Organisation). 12/11/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop self-evaluation systems to accurately identify areas for improvement in all areas of the EYFS.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are not fully safeguarded due to weaknesses in practitioner's knowledge and ineffective systems. Policies and procedures, whilst detailed, do not support the current situation or safeguard children because some practitioners are unclear about how to instigate child protection procedures and their personal responsibility to escalate concerns with confidence and vigour. Recruitment and vetting procedures are inconsistent, because some practitioner's files do not include evidence of ongoing suitability checks, references being undertaken or practitioner's signatures to confirm they have received copies of policies and procedures, consequently, vetting procedures are not sufficiently rigorous or robust to ensure children are fully protected. Changes to the leadership and management of this setting were not organised effectively to ensure a smooth transition for the new management team. Consequently, some aspects of the welfare requirements are not met. Despite being advised by Ofsted in June 2009 to form a committee, instigate suitability checks on said committee, and notify any changes, this has not happened. This is an offence unless the provider gives a

reasonable excuse. On this occasion the provider did so and Ofsted does not intend to take further action.

All children are welcome within the group and initial information is gathered about their backgrounds and individual needs. Practitioners have a sound understanding of equality and diversity and are sensitive to children's individual needs and family circumstances. Positive images, welcome signs and relevant information is displayed within the setting, giving children and families an initial sense of belonging and of being valued. Parents and carers receive helpful information at the beginning of their child's placement and are welcome to stay whilst children settle in. Feedback from parents and carers indicates they acknowledge their children are new to the setting, but overall they are satisfied with how well their children have settled and the level of information they receive. However, parents and carers are not informed about the role of the management committee as practitioners working within the setting are unclear about the management structure themselves. The group are established in the local community and have made effective links with local schools. The new management team are in the process of improving these links further by clarifying how best they will present information from children's learning journeys to the next setting.

Practitioners ensure children can play safely as they are vigilant in undertaking safety checks and updating charts accordingly. A formal risk assessment is in place and reviewed by practitioners. The learning environment has recently been re-organised to ensure toys and resources are used more effectively, affording children more opportunities for choice and experimentation in their play. Whilst the new management team have made a positive start in taking on responsibility for the group and seeking guidance from outside agencies, inherited, disorganised systems and the lack of self-evaluation means that priorities for future development are not yet fully identified and the overall organisation of documentation and filing systems are chaotic. The new management team have had insufficient time to fully evaluate the quality of the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Whilst children are broadly content and have settled well, children make inadequate progress within the EYFS. A change in leadership and new learning and development documentation means practitioners are in the process of trying to synthesise these changes as well as facilitate children's learning. A new system for allocating key worker groups has resulted in some children's development records not being completed and records for children who attended last term have been misplaced. This impacts on the effectiveness of children's learning and development. Most practitioners are experienced in delivering the EYFS and have attended training. Despite the gaps in children's development records, practitioners demonstrate a positive attitude to inclusion and because the group have established effective links with the local community additional support could be identified and offered without delay. Daily conversations, newsletters and a website help to keep parents and carers informed about children's progress. A new way of recording children's starting points has recently been introduced that

highlights children's play preferences, home culture and individual needs. A formal consultation with parents and carers is planned for later in the year to discuss children's progress and achievements by which time practitioners should be more confident and proactive in recording children's progress.

Practitioners treat children with respect and clearly enjoy their company, ensuring positive relationships are being formed. Children behave well and new friendships are being established. Any children upset on arrival settle quickly and are comforted by practitioners. Children see print in the environment as key words are displayed in different languages, helping to ensure families with English as an additional language are welcome. Children's understanding of diversity and differences is being developed as they take part in activities to celebrate festivals and special events, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Confidence skills are encouraged at circle time as children greet each other using a microphone and enjoy listening to the effect on their voices. Circle time is also used well to encourage counting skills and shape recognition and children confidently draw a triangle in the air with their fingers. Children use their imagination well in the role play area, pretending to talk to their family members on a telephone. Whilst children use magnetic fish to explore technological concepts, practitioner's confusion about when the computer is to be used results in under use of this resource. This limits opportunities for children to maximise the development of ICT skills and impacts on children's potential to fully develop of skills for the future learning.

Children are developing an understanding of healthy eating as they are provided with a variety of nutritious snacks and encouraged to drink plenty of fluids. The café style systems works wells in encouraging children's independence. Appropriate systems are in place if children have an accident or become ill whilst at the setting, including guidance on notifiable diseases. Practitioners hold up-to-date first aid certificates ensuring they can administer prompt treatment should the occasion arise. Children are developing an awareness of keeping themselves safe, as they practise emergency evacuation drills and are reminded to navigate space appropriately whilst playing outside to avoid collisions. Children have access to an adjacent play area, where they can develop their physical skills, such as running, pedalling and demonstrate using a scooter with speed and skill.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	4
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	4

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Arrangements for Safeguarding Children) 12/11/2009
- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact with, children) 19/10/2009
- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Providing information to Ofsted) 19/10/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Providing information to Ofsted) 19/10/2009
- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact with, children) 19/10/2009
- take action as specified in the Early years section of the report (Arrangements for Safeguarding Children) 12/11/2009