

# Little Tykes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number**

EY335475

**Inspection date**

21/01/2010

**Inspector**

Charalambos Loizou

**Setting address**

Thurnby Lodge Childrens Centre, Dudley Avenue, Leicester,  
LE5 2EG

**Telephone number**

0116 2924590

**Email**

shelley.marsden@leicester.gov.uk

**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## Description of the setting

Little Tykes Playgroup opened in May 2006. It is situated next to Thurnby Lodge Primary School. It operates from two rooms in a purpose-built building that is part of the Thurnby Lodge Children's Centre. Both the children's centre and playgroup are managed by Leicester City Local Authority. All children in the playgroup share access to secure and enclosed outdoor play areas. The playgroup is open each weekday from 8.45am to 11.45am for 38 weeks throughout the year. There is one additional afternoon session each Tuesday from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The children's centre incorporates a wide range of integrated services that includes the Little Tykes Playgroup and a crèche which is available to parents and carers who attend training sessions or use other services in the centre. The opening hours of the crèche vary according to the needs of parents using the centre. The playgroup is registered to receive a maximum of 78 children under eight years. There are currently 42 children on roll between the ages of two and three and of these 25 are nursery funded three-year-olds. A maximum of 12 children can be accommodated in the crèche. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Six staff are employed, which includes the playgroup manager, and they all have appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The accommodation provides suitable access for children and families with disabilities.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The playgroup provides good provision for children's learning, development and welfare. It is an inclusive setting that meets the needs of children of all backgrounds and abilities well. Parents and carers are pleased with the provision made for their children. The playgroup is well led and managed and demonstrates good capacity to sustain improvement in the future.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that staff incorporate key learning steps and development stages when planning activities that are closely matched to children's needs and abilities
- include more precise evaluations and assessments of the stages of learning and development when observing the children during indoor and outdoor activities.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The playgroup takes full advantage of its strong links with the children's centre and the Early Years Foundation Stage of its neighbouring school. There are efficient routines and effective policies in place that have enabled the staff to establish good working relationships with parents, carers and family members related to the children. The staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and ensure that planning and policies are kept up to date. Training and professional development are well organised so that staff have a good working knowledge of current early years practice and welfare requirements to ensure that the children enjoy their time in the playgroup and are kept healthy and safe. Each of the two rooms and outdoor areas are well equipped with books and resources that are accessible to all the children. Books and resources reflect ethnic and cultural diversity well. The outstanding partnerships established by the management team have secured substantial funding for outdoor areas and other resources. For example, there are advanced plans in place to add to and re-furbish what is already good outdoor provision to include covered canopies, water and wild areas, as well as different pathways with a range of textures for the children to explore.

Self-evaluation is well planned and organised, although some evaluations are descriptive making it difficult in some areas to assess what the playgroup needs to do to make it even better. All staff are encouraged to undertake risk assessments and record observations as well as comment on how best to improve the playgroup. There is an effective process of audit and review, including surveys and questionnaires of parents' and carers' views which enable the staff to continually improve provision for the benefit of children and families.

Parents and carers have good access to information and those who spoke to the inspector expressed their satisfaction, paying tribute to the efforts of the staff team. The staff are good at integrating children from different backgrounds, reflecting a good commitment to inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities for all. Anti-discriminatory practice is embedded well throughout the playgroup and children's centre. Children from families whose circumstances cause them to be vulnerable are well supported through the excellent links and services provided by the wider remit of the children's centre. For example, families take up the offer of care for their children in the crèche when attending training or other services such as health care or parenting workshops. Parents and carers are regularly invited to comment so the staff can reflect on future needs and ensure that they respond to any concerns or complaints.

The staff have a good knowledge of the settings strengths and areas for improvement. There is still more to do to sharpen up the way the staff plan activities because they do not always tailor them closely enough to meet the needs of children of different abilities. The staff are very well-qualified and have attended a good range of training that has prepared them exceptionally well to meet the welfare needs of the children. There are good safeguarding procedures and all the staff have paediatric first aid training and have been checked as to their suitability

to work with children, with good systems in place to ensure that records are kept up to date.

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

All children are engaged in well-themed activities that provide good opportunities for them to explore, experiment and learn through trial and error. For example, rising threes work with three-year-olds to experiment with sand and water or textures when making corn flour dough. Children extend their language and understanding of words and sounds when singing songs and nursery rhymes or when listening to well-told stories at the end of each session in the book area. They enjoy painting and cutting activities when making collages and experiment with different media which successfully encouraging them to improve their coordination skills as well as their knowledge of colour, texture and shapes. All the children experience a wide range of language activities when sharing books or when using the computer and touch screen to associate sounds with pictures or link numbers to objects. They self-register on arrival by recognising their name label and post it into the toy pillar box, reflecting the success with which they contribute to the playgroup and develop skills that prepares them well for the next stage of their education and development. Children develop their number, reasoning and problem solving skills well when counting numbers in order, or match shapes and images when dressing teddy using a computer program.

There are effective routines that help the children to settle quickly so they can enjoy playing and working indoors and outdoors with equal success. Activities are well organised to provide challenges, for example, when pouring water into different containers or assembling blocks and jigsaw puzzles. Children up to the age of three are thoroughly absorbed when choosing to dress up in the home corner. Three-year-olds often sustain interest for extended periods of time to explore sounds and pictures in books, toys and outdoor areas which contribute well to improving their understanding of numbers and shapes. All the children enjoy sharing books and listening to stories and then acting out the role of characters when dressing up or playing in the home corner.

The children have good opportunities to explore the outdoor areas safely and productively to improve their physical and creative development. Adults are very committed to their role in supporting the children from a diverse range of backgrounds and this is reflected in the good quality resources and activities that encourage and promote cultural and racial diversity. The staff successfully encourage the children to eat healthily at snack time with fruit, milk and fresh water provided each day. The children successfully develop their independence and make a good contribution to the playgroup and its local community. For example, 'team times' encourage the children to help others when tidying away. The children handle equipment and resources safely and efficiently, including their energetic use of wheeled toys outdoors where they take risks and learn to avoid collision through trial and error so improving their spatial awareness and physical development.

The staff have improved planning well since the last inspection and incorporate interesting themes and topics that are seasonal or reflect particular cultures or customs. Tasks are planned to stimulate interest and curiosity but assessments of the children are not sharp enough to identify each child's stage of development accurately. In addition, activities are not always tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of children of different abilities, so there are missed opportunities to extend their learning further. The children are happy and feel safe because the staff are vigilant and take good care of them. Effective procedures take full account of special dietary requirements or medical needs and these ensure that children's welfare needs are fully met as well as ensuring their safety and well-being.

The children behave well and considerately towards each other because staff model and encourage respect and good manners. There are good opportunities for the children to choose for themselves when moving between indoor and outdoor areas. The staff are very well trained to deal with occasional accidents and there are robust procedures to ensure that the children are safe through regular fire drills and effective first aid procedures. Snack times and story times are used well to enable the children to socialise and to reinforce their language and communication skills.

Parents and carers are kept well-informed so that they know how their children are doing through records called 'learning journeys', although these sometimes lack annotated details of specific learning stages so it is not always clear how well children are doing in relation to age related expectations. Toddlers under three and three-year-olds have access to a stimulating range of resources that include visual and tactile play boards mounted on walls, book and home corners, role play and building areas for the children to explore and experiment with. There are good opportunities for children to learn and play in all weathers because the staff have devised good routines and supervision rotas to ensure that the children engage equally in both indoor and outdoor activities.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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](http://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
---	-----

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