

# Littlebears Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY428545  
**Inspection date** 05/12/2011  
**Inspector** Susan Heap

**Setting address** St. Margarets C of E Primary School, School Road,  
WARRINGTON, WA2 9AD  
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**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Littlebears Playgroup was registered in 2011. It is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a classroom and associated facilities in St. Margaret's Church of England primary school. It is situated in the Orford area of Warrington. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 3pm for 48 weeks of the year. The building is fully accessible. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language.

It is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children in the early years age range may attend at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll, of whom 52 are in the early years age range. This includes a number of three- and four-year-old children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The playgroup is registered on both parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup also cares for children aged between five and eight years old for out of school care. There are five members of staff who work directly with children, three of whom hold relevant early years and childcare qualifications at level 3 and one has a level 2 qualification.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a friendly and welcoming staff team who demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting their emotional well-being and safety. Children enjoy a suitable range of activities both indoors and outdoors, which are age-appropriate for their changing developmental needs. This means that for the most part they are engaged in play which interests them, though these are not always challenging or specifically planned to meet individual needs. Most aspects of documentation which underpin daily practice and children's safety are good. The systems to evaluate practice are in the early stages of development. As a result, the management team have successfully identified areas for improvement to improve practice and the outcomes for children. Positive relationships with parents and other professionals are developing to successfully promote the children's care and education.

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

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

- develop opportunities for children to become aware of, explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and/or disability issues
- extend information on the child record form, to include, who has legal contact with a child as well as who has parental responsibility

- develop a system to check the on-going suitability of staff in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- ensure all evacuation drills are recorded in the fire logbook, with details of any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- develop the observation, assessment and planning systems to ensure that the staff team are fully confident in its delivery and to ensure each child receives a challenging and interesting learning experience.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding children in relation to child protection. They have a strong understanding of their responsibility to report any concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A range of well written policies and effective procedures underpin the daily practice and ensure children are safeguarded while in the setting. A robust recruitment procedure ensures the suitability of qualifications of all adults looking after the children or having unsupervised access to them. All staff have completed the required vetting procedures. There is an annual staff appraisal system in place, although there is no system for checking staff's on-going suitability. Risk assessments are undertaken both inside and outside the setting to minimise hazards, and the security of premises is well maintained. However, not all fire drills are recorded.

The majority of staff are qualified and update their professional skills by attending training workshops to enhance the quality of care. Staff are vigilant, work well together and deploy themselves effectively to promote children's safety and learning at all times. This is particularly beneficial due to the physical constraints of the setting. Due to the high staff to child ratio someone is always available to give a reassuring cuddle or a knee to sit on if children are tired or upset. The staff team are beginning to focus and put in place systems to improve their practice and the outcomes for children. They create a warm and welcoming, friendly environment and for the most part, toys and equipment are suitably organised to promote children's play and learning. However, resources, which support children's growing understanding of all aspects of diversity are limited. The setting has a good range of toys and equipment, which are stored in a large container, however, these have to be rotated due to the limited play space available.

The staff establish positive relationships with parents and carers and recognise their contribution as partners in their children's care and well-being. As a result, key written information about children's likes and dislikes and individual needs are sought at the beginning of the placement. However, written information about who has legal contact with the child is not in place. This has minimal impact on children's safety. This is due to the secure systems in place to ensure that children are only released to the care of people verified by parents and known to the staff. The views of parents are respected and each child is valued and treated as an individual. Information is shared verbally on a daily basis, through newsletters and the noticeboard. Systems to involve parents inputting their observations of their children's interests to inform future planning, and partnership working with other

settings that children may attend, are developing.

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

Clear routines are implemented for hand washing before snacks and meals, and after using the bathroom, which help children to develop their independence and personal care skills. Mealtimes are promoted as social occasions where staff and children sit together at tables to eat their lunch. Mid-morning and afternoon snacks of fresh fruit, yoghurt, toast, tortilla wraps or crumpets together with drinks of water or milk are available. These ensure that children's energy levels are maintained throughout the day. Particular attention is given to enabling children to build close bonds with their key worker. For example, key workers are responsible for their individual children's personal needs being met, such as toilet training or nappy changing. This also maintains children's privacy and dignity. Clear procedures ensure medication is given at the correct time and administered only by the manager and her deputy. This successfully promotes children's health, safety and welfare. Children benefit from opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area using a variety of equipment to develop their physical skills. These include riding bikes, sand and water play or planting in the growing areas. They concentrate for long periods on a chosen lacing activity which supports the development of their fine motor skills.

Children move safely and confidently around the playroom freely making choices and decisions in their play. They enjoy mark making activities, such as, using crayons and pens which are crucial for their early writing skills. The staff team fully support children as they sit alongside them level giving good eye contact and positive verbal encouragement in their chosen activity. Children behave well at all times, playing cooperatively and harmoniously together as they explore the sand, naming colours and the shapes of the containers. They are developing a good understanding of the boundaries that are in place to keep them safe and also to respect each other. For example, ground rules are revisited at circle time, children confidently stand in the circle and repeat these to the whole group, such as, 'being nice to each other' and 'to look for a timer' if two children want the same toy. This means they are successfully learning how to share, negotiate and take turns. They join in action songs enthusiastically as they practise for their forthcoming Christmas concert and listen attentively to stories.

Children are provided with satisfactory opportunities to help them make steady progress across the six areas of learning. Observation and assessment of children takes place but does not clearly identify their next steps in learning. Although, the staff are able to make the links to each of the six areas of learning, they recognise that they are not fully confident in the delivery of the observation, planning and assessment processes. This means that children are not always sufficiently challenged to make maximum progress across all areas of learning and development.

They are learning to develop skills in and use technology, such as, cause-and-

effect toys and programmable toys. A range of mathematical toys and games are available to develop children's understanding of numeracy, problem solving and reasoning, such as, jigsaws and construction materials. They are beginning to learn about nature through activities, such as growing and planting in containers in the outdoor area. Children form good relationships with the staff and involve them in their role play when pretending to be hairdressers. While at other times they play imaginatively with each other in the home corner taking on different roles, such as parents or children.

## 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>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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## **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