

Littlebears Playgroup

St. Margarets C of E Primary School, School Road, WARRINGTON, WA2 9AD

Inspection date	21/11/2014
Previous inspection date	05/12/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The provider shows an inadequate understanding of how to effectively safeguard children as suitability checks are not carried out on all staff to ensure they are safe to work with children. This compromises children's welfare.
- Staff's knowledge of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years is not sufficient to ensure an accurate assessment of their development is made.
- Staff do not have a secure knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, specifically about how children learn. Consequently, teaching is variable and children's learning and development is not always sufficiently supported or extended.
- Information about children's starting points is not consistently obtained. As a result, children's learning is not fully maximised from the outset.
- Partnership working with other settings is not fully established to ensure children's learning is consolidated and extended effectively.

It has the following strengths

- Staff provide a welcoming environment in which to care for children.
- Children are settled, well behaved and have developed secure relationships with staff and each other.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playrooms and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
The inspector held meetings with the manager and checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and the planning documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Karen Cox

Full report

Information about the setting

Littlebears Playgroup was registered in 2011 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the Orford area of Warrington and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a classroom and associated facilities in St. Margaret's Church of England primary school. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 3pm, for 48 weeks of the year. There are currently 56 children on roll who are in the early years age range. The playgroup also cares for children aged between five and eight years old, providing out of school care at a breakfast club. There are currently five members of staff working directly with children and one volunteer. Four of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one has a level 2 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- implement robust procedures for vetting adults, including obtaining enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, to establish the suitability of those working with children
- increase staff's knowledge of how to complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years, so that children's development is supported and parents are provided with a summary of their child's progress
- develop a better understanding of how children learn in order to implement a broad range of challenging activities, so that children are best supported to make good progress across all areas of learning
- establish arrangements for sharing information and working in partnership with other providers when children attend more than one setting to fully support children's learning and development
- embed a robust and consistent system to observe and track children's progress, which includes consistently obtaining information about children's starting points.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- monitor and support staff in extending children's thinking skills further, by ensuring that they consistently develop good teaching strategies, for example, by using open-ended questions during activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The quality of teaching is variable as interactions between staff and children are not always effective enough to ensure that learning experiences are challenging. For example, most staff do not use effective teaching strategies, such as open-ended questions, to extend children's language development and encourage their thinking skills. This is because not all staff have a secure knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, specifically about the different ways that children learn. The manager's knowledge of the legal requirement to complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years and her responsibility to share this with parents is not sufficient. This means that parents do not receive an accurate assessment of their child's progress in the prime areas of learning, and are not made aware of any gaps in learning that may require early intervention. Staff work together to plan activities that cover the seven areas of learning. They record some observations of children's learning and know how to link these to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff carry out some basic assessments to measure children's progress and use this information to plan the next steps in children's learning based on their interests. However, staff do not consistently obtain information about what children already know and can do. As a result, experiences to promote and maximise learning and development are not provided from the outset. Therefore, children make slower progress.

Children occupy themselves with toys they choose independently. Some incidental learning takes place due to the types of toys available. For example, children develop hand-and-eye coordination as they build a tower of bricks. Children have opportunities to use their imagination. For example, they dress-up as nurses and use real bandages on each other and their dolls during their play. This develops their understanding of the world around them and support their communication and language development. Children enjoy creative opportunities as they produce handprints for a Christmas themed picture and have opportunities to practise their early writing skills, as they freely explore paints with paintbrushes. This to some extent prepares them in readiness for school and the next stage in their future learning. Older children enjoy completing jigsaw puzzles and staff introduce some simple mathematical concepts as they count how many pieces they have.

Staff share information with parents about their child's day-to-day activities and care routines. The playgroup has recently introduced parent evenings in order to involve them in their child's learning and development but recognises that further strategies are needed to ensure that information is obtained consistently, in particular with regard to what children already know and can do. The playgroup does not share accurate information with other providers that the children attend in order to ensure that their learning is consolidated and extended effectively. As a result, some children do not have activities planned that are tailored to their specific learning and development requirements.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children's personal social and emotional needs are addressed appropriately. They are happy, settled and enjoy the company of staff. This demonstrates that children have established appropriate relationships with their key person, and are comfortable and secure in the playgroup. Children are confident as they make their own choices about what they want to play with and where they want to play. The indoor environment is suitably organised, allowing children to access a developmentally appropriate range of toys and resources covering all areas of learning. Outside, children benefit from a range of large physical equipment that promotes their physical development and encourages them to take risks, for example, as they steer the wheeled toys around a track, negotiating the available space. Staff encourage children in their play, offer lots of praise and encouragement, and are always available when children need help. This supports children's emotional well-being. Children are happy and settled in this environment and show by their words and actions that they feel safe and secure. Children happily go to staff for comfort, reassurance and support and show a good sense of belonging. However, the weakness identified in respect of safeguarding children's welfare by ensuring that those working with children have undergone appropriate checks, means that children's well-being cannot be fully assured.

The playgroup provides sufficient beds and relaxation areas to allow children to rest and sleep in comfort. Staff regularly check sleeping children to help promote their health, safety and well-being at these times. Children learn how to evacuate the premises quickly in the event of an emergency as they take part in regular fire drills with staff. As a result, children are learning to keep themselves safe. Children behave appropriately. Staff encourage children to recall the playgroup's rules at the start of every session and provide gentle reminders about the need to share and play cooperatively with their friends. Consequently, children understand the expectations of the playgroup and are beginning to understand right from wrong. Staff regularly praise children for their good efforts, which effectively boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

Children are given a wealth of opportunities to practise their independence and self-care skills. For example, they pour their own drinks at snack time and are encouraged to open packaging independently when choosing items in their lunchboxes. Children are encouraged to choose healthy options first, such as sandwiches and fruit. As a result, children are learning the importance of making healthy choices as part of a healthy lifestyle. As the children get ready to enjoy outdoor play, they are encouraged to put on their own coats and wellington boots, which they do with increasing confidence. This helps children to gain skills that will support them when they move to school.

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

Leadership and management of the playgroup are inadequate. Some of the safeguarding and welfare requirements are not met. This is because not all staff who have regular access to children have been subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks. This breach of a legal requirement compromises children's well-being and safety. However, staff are

aware of how to deal with concerns about the welfare of a child and know what procedure they should follow to protect them. The premises are safe and secure and adequate procedures are followed to ensure children's safety indoors and when on outings. Staff show an appropriate understanding of risk management. Daily checks are made of all areas accessible to children in order to minimise risk.

Systems to monitor the effectiveness of children's learning and development are weak. While staff have recently started to monitor children's development and record observations of their progress and achievements, this is not completed consistently for all children. As a result, the learning and development requirements are not being met; in particular the completion of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. This is a breach of a legal requirement. Staff have opportunities to attend additional training and the manager conducts regular supervisions and observations to monitor staff's performance. She observes staff practice and identifies strengths and weaknesses. However, these are not sufficiently focused to support staff in developing teaching strategies that maximise learning at every opportunity. While the playgroup has made progress to address the recommendation from the previous inspection regarding observation, planning and assessment, this information is not completed consistently. Consequently, this has an impact on the progress that children are able to make. The manager has addressed all remaining recommendations from the previous inspection and is working with local authority advisors to develop action plans that target weaknesses in the provision.

Partnerships with parents are generally effective. Parents receive information about the provision of care for their child through different forms of communication, such as, newsletters, sharing of policies and information on noticeboards. This helps to keep parents fully informed and involved in their child's time at the playgroup. Staff encourage parents to share their views about the service provided through questionnaires. Parents comment that they are very happy with the playgroup and that their children enjoy attending. The manager understands the importance of working with other agencies, such as speech and language therapists and family support workers to fully support children's progress and development. However, this understanding has not been put into practice, to ensure that relevant information is shared when children attend more than one setting. Consequently, the playgroup is unable to build on learning that takes place elsewhere. Good relationships between children, staff, parents and carers are evident, which fosters a positive environment for children who attend.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that any person having unsupervised contact with children is suitable and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check has been obtained in respect of that person (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that any person having unsupervised contact with children is suitable and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check has been obtained in respect of that person (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY428545
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	870328
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	St Margaret's Playgroup (orford) Committee
Date of previous inspection	05/12/2011
Telephone number	01925634207

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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 assesses 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 4234, or email 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

