

Little Otters Children's Centre

Marshgate, Camelford, Cornwall, PL32 9YN



Inspection date 29 June 2016
Previous inspection date 16 April 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The manager does not effectively ensure that staff consistently interact and challenge all children in their activities. At times, younger children lack staff attention and support, for example, in their imaginative and exploratory play.
- The organisation of staff and activities does not always successfully support children. Staff do not always encourage and engage children well in their play, to increase the learning opportunities and extend the rate at which children make progress.
- The manager does not ensure that staff follow effective potty training procedures to fully support good hygiene, privacy and dignity for younger children.
- The manager does not ensure that self-evaluation is thorough to develop consistent improvements to staff practice. Although the manager and staff monitor children's progress reasonably well, the manager does not ensure that staff always challenge and support children's next steps during activities.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are kind and caring. They are aware of children's individual care needs and meet them well. Children are comfortable and content under the staff's close supervision.
- The positive links with local schools enable staff to prepare children for their eventual move. Staff share relevant information with parents and others to encourage continuity of care and help to support children's development.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage the provider must:

	Due Date
■ improve staff teaching skills and interactions with children to provide consistently challenging experiences that meet children's individual learning needs, with particular regard to children approaching and reaching the age of three years	24/08/2016
■ review and improve the organisation of activities and staff to ensure that all children receive continuous support, to fully engage them and increase their learning opportunities	24/08/2016
■ review and improve the arrangements for potty training, to help young children develop a better understanding of hygiene, privacy and dignity.	24/08/2016

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

- develop rigorous self-evaluation procedures to monitor weaknesses in the quality of teaching more accurately, and take effective action to improve the outcomes for children.

Inspection activities

- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and parents.
- The inspector observed staff and children in their indoor and outdoor activities.
- The inspector sampled children's development records and checked required documentation.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector viewed the safety of the premises.

Inspector
Julie Wright

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

Since the last inspection, the manager has made some changes to improve practice. For example, a cafe-style snack time enables staff to leave resources out for children, which helps to prevent interruptions in play. Staff benefit from some training opportunities, such as to support children's communication and language development. The manager has suitable action plans for ongoing improvement. However, she has not effectively ensured that changes in staffing do not hinder their progress to make positive changes. This has led to weaknesses in the quality of teaching and children's learning experiences. Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of child protection procedures to safeguard children's welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

There is a suitable range of resources and activities in each group room. Younger children enjoy sensory play experiences, such as exploring foam, pasta and ice. They enjoy water play for a sustained time. Staff provide some support but often move away from activities to do something else, missing opportunities to extend children's exploration further. Not all staff have the confidence and skills to further challenge children of different ages and abilities. For example, they do not encourage older toddlers to recognise colours and count when they build a tower of bricks. To help prepare older children for school, staff teach them about letters and sounds. Older children practise writing and take part in various group activities. However, they are sometimes distracted by other activities and this affects their concentration.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Babies develop secure relationships with familiar staff. They smile and babble with pleasure as staff talk to them and offer comfort. Young children discover role play resources and like to play in the tent. However, at times, they lack staff support to engage them in meaningful play and learning. All children benefit from daily exercise and outdoor play. They readily join group activities, which supports their developing social skills. However, not all activities challenge children sufficiently at all times. Older children show increasing independence in their personal care. Staff promptly tend to the younger children's needs. They provide potties in the playroom; however, they do not manage this well enough so that children learn appropriate hygiene, respect and dignity.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Children arrive happily. They understand the daily routines and show confidence as they move around. Overall, children make sound progress from their starting points. They develop skills for future learning, although inconsistent challenges and staff support do not fully encourage all children to achieve to the best of their abilities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	103037
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	1027959
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	29
Number of children on roll	48
Name of registered person	Little Otters Children's Centre Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909357
Date of previous inspection	16 April 2013
Telephone number	01840 261593

Little Otters Children's Centre opened in 1991. It is located on the outskirts of Otterham, near to the village of Marshgate, North Cornwall. The setting is a registered charity managed by a committee of parents and interested others. It is open five days a week, 50 weeks of the year, from 8am to 5.30pm. The setting receives early education funding to provide free places for children aged two, three and four years. There are 10 staff employed to work with the children, eight of whom have early years qualifications. The manager holds early years professional status.

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