

Inspection of Little Tots Academy

25 - 27 Sherburn Terrace, CONSETT, County Durham DH8 6ND

Inspection date:

26 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's safety, welfare, learning and development continue to be significantly compromised in the setting. There has been little improvement since the last inspection. Not all staff have a secure understanding of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare. Thorough risk assessments are not completed.

Children's learning is minimal at the setting and they are often bored and disengaged. They do not have access to a curriculum which is exciting, and which helps them to learn. For example, songs, rhymes and stories are not built into the daily routine and this hinders children's language development. Their learning needs and any gaps in progress, are not routinely identified. As a result, some children are not gaining the skills and attitudes they need to make a successful start in the next stage of their education. Children often struggle to manage their behaviour, have poor self-control and a lack of respect for others. They shout, climb on tables and demand staff's attention. Other children copy this behaviour. This results in a chaotic and negative environment.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- There have been considerable changes to staffing since the last inspection. This has meant a change in who is the key person for some children. This has not been managed well. Some staff are unsure of which children they are responsible for or what their needs are. As a result, those children's needs are not always met. Additionally, important information about these children has not been shared with school to ease their transition in September.
- Children occasionally become distressed due to staff failing to work closely with parents and carers. For example, information is not shared about changes to childcare rooms so that parents and carers can prepare children for this transition.
- Although supervision sessions have been carried out with staff, these have not been effective in fostering continuous improvement, particularly in the delivery of the curriculum.
- Staff often struggle to meet children's needs as well as having to undertake other duties, such as cooking and managerial tasks. They are not always deployed effectively. For example, at times, on the day of inspection, the manager cared for just one child in the baby room. Consideration was not given as to how groups of children could be re-organised to reduce the demands on other staff to improve quality of care and teaching.
- During school holidays children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive an appropriate level of support due to reduced staffing levels. They gain little from their time at the setting and just wander aimlessly.

Additional pressure is placed on staff and subsequently this has a negative impact on all children's learning.

- The setting is in receipt of additional funding for some children and this has been used to purchase resources to support their learning. However, these are not readily available to children during school holidays, therefore, do not improve outcomes for children at this time.
- Staff are kind and caring and children approach them and the nursery owner with ease and confidence. Most parents speak positively of the relationships their children have built with staff. They say that some information is passed on at hand over times. However, information shared about children's learning, their progress and how this can be supported at home, is minimal.
- Parents are not routinely reminded about the policies for the setting, such as the procedures for managing nut allergies. This results in inappropriate food being sent in from home and children becoming extremely distressed when they are not allowed to have it because of the risk to other children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Although staff have an understanding of the possible indicators of abuse, not all are informed about local child protection procedures. They are unsure of who to contact if they have concerns about the welfare of a child if the designated lead for child protection is absent. The manager has increased her knowledge of how to manage allegations against a member of staff and this is now done in line with requirements. Risk assessments have failed to identify the danger posed to children from loose trailing lights in the two- to three-year-old room. This room is currently being used for most children attending the setting during the school holidays.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure all staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedures so that they can take prompt and appropriate action should they have concerns about a child	10/08/2022

implement effective supervision arrangements for staff, including the manager to support and develop them in their roles including the delivery of an ambitious curriculum for all children	10/08/2022
introduce an effective key person system to ensure every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to build a relationship with their parents and carers	10/08/2022
improve the organisation of the setting and staffing arrangements to ensure children's individual needs are met and help reduce the burden of additional workload, such as cooking and cleaning	10/08/2022
take all reasonable steps to ensure children are not exposed to risks: this relates to strings of fairy lights in the two- to three-year-old room	10/08/2022
put arrangements to support children with SEND out of term time and ensure additional funding is used appropriately	10/08/2022
improve the ways in which information is shared with parents to ensure children's needs are fully met, for example, when transitioning children between rooms, to ensure information about learning is shared, and to ensure parents are fully aware of the policies of the setting.	10/08/2022

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

	Due date
develop and deliver an ambitious curriculum that provides challenge to individual children's learning, keeps them engaged in activities and prepares them for school	01/09/2022

implement effective systems to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and identify any gaps in their learning and use the information gained to plan activities and support.	01/09/2022
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Setting details

Unique reference number	EY497602
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10237184
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Little Tots Academy Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP901766
Telephone number	01207 438 900
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2022

Information about this early years setting

Little Tots Academy registered in 2016. The setting employs five members of childcare staff, including the manager. The majority of staff hold childcare qualifications at level 2 and above. The setting opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lindsey Pollock

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the nursery's curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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