

Inspection of Little Stars Playgroup

The Portacabin at St. Bedes RC Primary School, Front Street, Sacriston, Durham
DH7 6AB

Inspection date: 7 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thrive in this warm and welcoming, fully inclusive setting. They demonstrate close relationships with staff as they happily enter the playgroup. Children enjoy finding their names as part of the registration process. They talk to each other about who is going to be in the setting on that day. This gives children a real sense of belonging. Children take part in activities with enthusiasm and excitement. They quickly become engaged in activities and are motivated to learn. For instance, they excitedly explore the large garden as they hunt for pretend worms. They use magnifying glasses to explore and look at the worms closely. Staff use these interests to promote children's mathematical development. For instance, encouraging them to count the number of worms and compare their sizes and colours.

Staff have high expectations and are good role models. Children's behaviour is excellent. They respect each other, take turns and listen to simple instructions during play. For example, they help to set the table before mealtimes. Children wash their hands before they eat. They know this is to clean their hands before touching food. Children know what the routines of the setting are. This makes them feel safe and secure.

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

- Staff plan a range of interesting and purposeful adult-led and child-initiated play experiences for children, indoors and outdoors. They develop their imagination well. For example, children become engrossed as they use natural materials to construct a house for the dinosaurs.
- Staff mostly support children's communication skills very well. Staff facilitate conversations and children enjoy two-way conversations with both staff and their peers. However, on occasion, staff use informal language, for example, saying 'pretendey' and 'doggy'. This means that children do not always hear the correct pronunciation of words.
- Staff are always striving to improve their practice. They recognise the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on families and young children, for example children's understanding of the world. Staff take children out into the community where they visit the library or go to the local shops to buy vegetables. Children regularly take part in experiences, such as forest school activities. These include using tools to dig and growing fruit and vegetables.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Comments from parents are positive. Parents state that staff are warm and welcoming. They say they are very well informed about their children's progress and next steps in learning. Staff listen to parents, for example, through the use of parent questionnaires. They value their input and see them as partners in children's learning.

- Staff encourage children's independence including when they pour themselves a drink from the water station. Children butter their toast and cut their vegetables. Children have good table manners and learn to use utensils when eating their healthy snacks. Children learn about oral hygiene and healthy food choices. This helps support children to develop the skills they will need in readiness for school and raises their awareness of leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Staff support children to take risks and challenge themselves physically. For example, children enjoy climbing the pallets to the slide with increasing confidence, and speeding down the naturally sloping garden on balance bikes and peddle cars. However, staff do not consistently support children's understanding of how to travel safely as they play on bikes. For example, sharing the importance of wearing protective equipment to support their overall health.
- The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable and works very well with parents and the local authority to put specific plans in place. This helps to ensure early intervention for children who may need extra support, so that all children are able to make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff's professional development is given a high priority. The impact of recent mathematics training is evident in staff's confidence in teaching mathematical language and concepts. Children of all ages demonstrate strong mathematical skills. For instance, staff encourage children to subitise or to look at a small number of objects and instantly recognise how many objects there are without needing to count.
- Leaders and staff are passionate about their provision. They are dedicated to providing good quality education to children. Staff feel well supported by the management team. Managers conduct regular supervision meetings with staff and carry out observations of staff practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding children is a priority within the playgroup and share safeguarding procedures with staff, visitors and parents. They ensure that staff's knowledge and skills are kept up to date through induction training that is regularly revisited during staff meetings and individual supervisions. Staff know the signs and signals which might suggest that a child is at risk of harm. They know what to do if they have a worry about a child's safety and well-being or they have concerns about the conduct of a colleague. Rigorous and robust recruitment procedures are in place. Staff follow risk assessments to keep children safe in the setting and on visits.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to understand the importance of always modelling the correct pronunciation of words
- help children to develop a deeper understanding of factors that support their overall health and well-being.

Setting details

Unique reference number	314176
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10229416
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	15
Name of registered person	Little Stars Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519429
Telephone number	07920850644
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Stars Playgroup registered in 1993. The playgroup employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one at level 5. The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Crumpton

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at playgroup.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual and manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the playgroup.

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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