

# Inspection of Larksfoot

Leighton Hall, Storrs Lane, Carnforth LA5 9ST

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Inspection date: 10 January 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is inadequate

Children's safety is compromised in this setting. This is due to leaders not ensuring that the setting is secure, to prevent unauthorised people from entering or children from leaving unsupervised. Furthermore, leaders have not carried out adequate risk assessments of the gate that is used to access the setting and another gate that leads onto the allotments of the hall where the setting is situated. Consequently, both these gates are unlocked and not secure. This puts children at risk of harm. Children are not always adequately supervised. For example, at times, some children are outside while staff are inside the yurt attending to the needs of other children.

Despite these weaknesses, children are happy in this setting. Children have ample opportunity to learn outside in this forest school setting. They get daily fresh air and exercise. Children enjoy taking long walks around the grounds of the hall and through the gardens and woods. Children practise their balance and coordination skills as they explore the woodlands.

Generally, children behave well. Staff support them to manage their own conflicts and build resilience. Children display good levels of self-esteem. Staff engage with children and listen as they talk. This helps to support children's emotional well-being.

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

- Leaders have failed to notify Ofsted of one of the registered individuals of the setting. Therefore, Ofsted has been unable to carry out the required checks on this person. However, the setting has carried out their own suitability and vetting checks to ensure that this person is suitable to work with children.
- Following a recent incident, a child was able to leave the setting unsupervised. In response to this, leaders have put some measures in place to reduce the risk of this happening again. However, leaders have not carried out sufficient risk assessments or implemented adequate safety measures to ensure the premises are secure.
- Leaders have a clear curriculum in place, which is in line with the forest school curriculum. The educational programmes are understood by all staff. Staff plan learning experiences for children which build on what they already know and can do. Consequently, children make good progress in their learning.
- Staff support children to learn to manage and take risks in the natural environment, such as, climbing trees and helping to light the campfire. However, staff do not always follow the setting's policy on staffing arrangements. Consequently, at times, children are unsupervised in the outdoor area, which is not secure.

- Children make good progress with their communication and language development. Staff consistently encourage children to think critically and test out their ideas. Children engage in high levels of interaction with their friends and staff. They articulate themselves well. Children persist when things do not go to plan and come up with new ideas together. Staff ask lots of thought-provoking questions. This encourages lots of conversations between children and staff, and supports children's growing vocabulary.
- Children confidently dress themselves in their 'wet weather' clothes before playing outside and remove these wet clothes and hang them to dry on their return to the yurt. Therefore, they develop their independence skills.
- Generally, staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Leaders work closely with other professionals, including the staff of other settings that children attend. Leaders share important information about children's needs with these professionals and parents to ensure that children receive the support they need promptly. Leaders have effective, targeted plans in place for children with SEND, which staff integrate into their planning. This ensures that any gaps in children's learning are closed in a timely manner.
- Leaders effectively evaluate staff practice and provide them with positive and constructive feedback to support them to continuously improve the curriculum for children. Leaders ensure that staff keep up to date with their mandatory training. Staff also attend a wealth of training courses to support their continuous professional development. Therefore, staff are continuously reflecting on their practice and making improvements to the learning experiences they plan for children.
- Parents speak highly of the staff at this setting. They comment that, 'staff are clearly dedicated to making every day full of adventure, learning and play, never missing an opportunity to explore what they find along the way'. Parents feel that, 'all the staff are very friendly, approachable and all communicate well and really make us feel comfortable'.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

While leaders and staff carry out regular checks of the environment and remove or minimise some hazards, such as putting bark down in the outdoor area to stop children slipping, they have failed to ensure that the premises are secure and safe. Unauthorised visitors can enter the premises and children can get out through two separate unlocked gates. Leaders have not adequately risk assessed the gates or put in place sufficient safety measures to ensure that children are kept safe. That said, leaders have a secure knowledge and understanding of the potential signs and symptoms of abuse. They know how to correctly report concerns about the welfare of children. Leaders understand the different roles and responsibilities of other professionals involved in the care and welfare of children.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and  
Childcare Register the provider must:**

|  | <b>Due date</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| ensure that all necessary steps are taken to keep children safe, with particular regard to ensuring the setting is secure to prevent unauthorised people from entering or children from leaving unsupervised | 31/01/2023      |
| ensure risk assessments identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, to make sure children are not exposed to risks       | 31/01/2023      |
| ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children to ensure their safety, and that staff are always effectively deployed so that children are adequately supervised.                          | 31/01/2023      |

## Setting details

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|--|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | 2654388   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Lancashire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10267574  |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Sessional day care  |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 3 to 9  |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 19  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 23  |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Larksfoot CIC   |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | 2654387   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 07877388034   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | Not applicable  |

## Information about this early years setting

Larksfoot CIC registered in 2021. It operates from Leighton Hall in Carnforth. The setting opens from Tuesday to Thursday, term time only, from 9am until 4pm. The setting offers holiday care in the school holidays from 9am until 3pm.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Suzanne Fenwick

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The provider joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 provider showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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