

# Inspection of Little Otters Children's Centre

Marshgate, Camelford, Cornwall PL32 9YN

---

Inspection date: 26 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
------------------------------	-------------

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	<b>Good</b>
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

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

### The provision is good

Staff give each child a warm welcome and help them to settle quickly into playing. They create a calm and gentle environment where children are well cared for. Children take part in a range of sensory experiences and develop curiosity about the world around them. They play happily alongside their friends and readily share toys. Children experiment with water play and care for toy babies in the home corner.

British values are embedded within daily routines. Staff give older children the opportunity to vote on which toys they would like to play with that day. Children learn how to take turns while playing dominoes in a group. They happily follow rules that keep them safe. Children learn about cultural diversity in a number of different ways, including learning about celebrations such as Chinese New Year.

The manager speaks positively about the long-term impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the children's centre. For example, fewer children in each session allow more space for play. In addition, staff find it easier to communicate with each other and support the children now they are a smaller team. This helps support children to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.

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

- The manager is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She works in partnership with her staff to develop the learning environment and plan a curriculum based on developing children's curiosity. There are good systems in place for monitoring teaching, including regular supervision sessions. Staff undertake a range of in-depth training, such as outdoor first aid. The manager mentors younger members of staff and supports more experienced staff to 'grow' as practitioners. As a result, staff well-being is high.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive. Staff swiftly identify children who are in need of additional support and put in place individual plans. They work well with professionals outside the setting to develop the provision for children with SEND. For example, staff have followed advice to make their uniforms more recognisable for visually impaired children.
- Children are engaged in meaningful activities at all times. Babies and toddlers learn how to make big movements to mix shaving foam and paint with sticks in large trays. Staff play alongside children and help to develop their vocabulary by talking about how things feel and look. They introduce new words such as 'skyscraper,' as the older children build towers from large wooden blocks. However, their use of questioning is not as effective as it could be to extend children's understanding, and staff sometimes do not give children enough time to respond.

- Staff begin to foster a love of reading with the children. They use story sacks to engage babies in listening to simple stories about zoo animals. They read sensory books with toddlers, who delight in touching and feeling the pages as they listen to the words. Older children look at books independently in the indoor area. However, children have direct access to very few books and staff do not make enough use of books to develop learning as they play with children.
- Staff make the most of the large outdoor area to teach the children about both healthy lifestyles and the wider world. Children develop their physical skills and learn about cooperation through the use of two-person, ride-on toys. Younger children develop their core strength as they climb on the wooden pirate ship. Staff have developed a forest school area and have undertaken training to effectively use it. Children explore nature through building insect houses and learning about different plants.
- Parent partnerships are very good. Staff work hard to ensure that new children take part in a thorough settling-in process. The key-person system is effective. Staff make every effort to communicate regularly with parents to let them know their child's next steps. Parents appreciate the support staff provide in helping their children to be ready to go to school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff update their safeguarding training regularly. They can confidently identify a range of signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to report their concerns. There are effective processes in place for identifying patterns of absence and existing injuries that could indicate abuse. Staff use thorough daily checklists to ensure the indoor and outdoor areas are safe. They teach children how to keep themselves safe in the outdoor area and about which plants are safe to touch and which are not in the surrounding hedgerows. The highest priority is given to ensuring safe-sleeping arrangements are in place in the baby room.

## **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 use effective questioning in order to give children more opportunities to develop their communication and language skills
- allow children access to a greater range of books to support their learning.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103037
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10263660
<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>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	29
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	38
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Otters Children's Centre, Camelford Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP909357
<b>Telephone number</b>	01840 261593
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 May 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Little Otters Children's Centre registered in 1991. It is located on the outskirts of Otterham, near to the village of Marshgate, North Cornwall. It is open five days a week, for 50 weeks of the year. It is currently open from 8am to 5.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 8am to 5pm on Wednesdays and from 8am to 3.30pm on Fridays. The setting receives early education funding to provide free places for children aged two, three and four years. The manager has achieved early years professional status. There are an additional five members of staff who all hold level 3 early years qualifications.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Leanne Edge

## 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.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke 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 that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views on the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the children's centre.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023