

Inspection of Little Sticks Forest School

Aspull Rugby Club, Woods Road, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 1PJ

Inspection date: 4 August 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children excel at the forest school setting and get off to the best possible start in life. Staff know the children exceptionally well and facilitate learning through developing their interests. This means children feel happy and safe. They are eager to share what they love and have a passion for at the setting as they know that their voice is heard. Children try new things and achieve their own personal goals daily. This is a result of the staff knowing the children well and supporting them to build confidence and resilience. They encourage this by giving rings out to children to add to the 'proud tree' in recognition of their achievement.

Children learn to be highly respectful members of the community. They respect the environment by learning how to keep it clean and tidy. Children go litter picking and help to re-open local footpaths that have become overgrown. They talk highly of the 'king wing' and how they stamped on the weeds to help prepare the land. Children now use this to investigate nature, explore and name plants and develop their learning. They show great pride in their time at the setting and parents comment on how they bring this learning home.

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

- The setting has a clear, expertly delivered curriculum. They provide activities and opportunities that children find engaging. They know their children well. For example, children enjoy roasting 's'mores' on the camp fire, for which staff plan individual learning intents for each child. This helps children excel and progress in their learning.
- All staff have equally high expectations of children. This is clear through the effective routines that both the children and staff take part in. For example, staff say 'sticky feet' and all children form a circle. They are able to say why they do 'sticky feet' and even relatively new children to the setting understand the importance of this task. This means that no learning time is wasted and all children stay safe.
- Children understand the importance of sharing their emotions. For example, they are encouraged to share how they feel at the end of each session. Staff have worked hard to support children with their personal, social and emotional development. This means children feel confident and comfortable sharing their feelings with others.
- Leaders know the staff and the children thrive. They are proactive in their approach and unwavering ambition. For example, peer observations and 'plan, reflect, reviews' take place regularly. Leaders continually adapt policies, taking on board feedback obtained. This means that practice rapidly and continually improves.
- Parents speak extremely highly of the setting and are eager to share their

thoughts and feelings. For example, they explain how staff share experiences with them. Parents feel supported by the staff and happy to leave their children in their care. Parental involvement is exceedingly effective.

- Children speak equally as highly of the setting as parents. They are eager to share what they think of the setting. Through tracking children, the setting consistently assures their development and growth during their time there.
- Leaders are proactive in making links with other setting and persevere in contacting settings to share information about children who start at the setting. They also have ongoing links with other settings and invite them to visit to observe children in the forest. This helps support children's and parents' seamless transitions.
- Staff are highly trained and enthusiastic about their professional development. For example, staff eagerly ask to attend courses and leaders are happy for them to attend. These always link directly to what the setting need to develop to support the individual children in their care. This shows that children are at the heart of all that the setting does.
- Staff are constantly embedding key vocabulary. They develop children's communication skills linked directly to the prime areas of learning. For example, children are taught about 'gauntlets' and take in new language readily and regularly. This means that children are able to express themselves effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding at the setting is highly effective. The designated safeguarding lead keeps up to date with relevant information and shares this with other staff. They give regular scenarios to other staff to check and keep staff up to date with what to look out for and what to do if safeguarding was a concern. Staff set high expectations of children in the forest with boundaries and check that children know and understand why these boundaries are important and what to do in certain scenarios, for example if there was a dog in the forest. Children know and use the respect position to stay safe around the fire and when using tools.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2590642
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10280909
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	15
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	Little Sticks Forest School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2590641
Telephone number	07817140080
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Stick Forest School registered 2021. The forest school is located in the grounds of Aspull Rugby club in Wigan. The forest school employs six members of staff of whom two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 qts. The four staff working directly with the children also all hold a level 3 forest school qualification. The forest school operates from Monday to Friday each week, except for one week at Easter, one week in May, two weeks at Christmas, two weeks in the summer and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 5pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Shearman

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the nursery and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children communicated with 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 outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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