

# The Little Group Early Years Centre Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY413135  
**Inspection date** 03/02/2011  
**Inspector** Mandy Gannon

**Setting address** St. Andrews C of E Secondary School, Lockhart Road,  
COBHAM, Surrey, KT11 2AX  
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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## **Description of the setting**

'the little group' is a re-registration of an established provision that moved premises in August 2010. It offers specialist day care for children aged two to six years who have a complex communication or autistic spectrum disorder and admission to the nursery is by open referral. They are registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register for a maximum of 35 children aged under eight, of whom all may be within the early years age range, and none may be aged under two years. There are currently 34 children on roll, 32 of which are in the early years age range. The setting is situated within a two storey building within the grounds of St Andrews Church of England school in Cobham, Surrey. The provision is open Monday to Thursday from 9.30am until 3pm and 9.30am until 12am on Fridays, term time only. Children are grouped into one of three classes; children attend morning or afternoon sessions, some children who attend all day sessions go on community based outings in the afternoon. Toilet facilities are located on the ground floor. In addition, there is a fully equipped training room, a sensory room, a staff room and a multi-purpose room. There is a garden available for outdoor play.

Each class has a fully qualified teacher and a speech therapist as well as at least one teaching assistant. There are 16 members of staff including the manager. Staff hold appropriate and highly accredited qualifications including Masters degrees in speech and language therapy, a postgraduate certificate in autism (children), a foundation degree in special educational needs in the early years, Early Years Professional Status, Qualified Teacher Status, and the national Professional Qualification for Headship.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Its mission statement includes 'to lead the field in the specialist provision of early intervention for children with autistic spectrum disorder and their families and to inspire the practice of others, promote a sense of self-worth, security and trust in a fun loving and motivating environment'. The setting is highly effective in accomplishing these aims as this superb, unique service is a true beacon of excellence in all areas where the practitioners go out of their way to meet the needs of the children and their families. Children make exceptional strides in the learning and development in relation to their starting point and capabilities. Exceptional, inspiring leaders and collaborative partnerships ensures the best possible outcome for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person

should consider:

- further developing the outside area to enhance children's ability to use their senses, to learn about the world around them and make connections between new information and what they already know.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are exceptionally well safeguarded due to the expertise and understanding of skilled practitioners who have a thorough knowledge of the individual needs of children in their care. Robust recruitment systems and comprehensive policies and procedures are in place which are regularly reviewed and updated. Practitioners have completed child protection training to recognise possible abuse and neglect and ensure the accurate maintenance of records and monitoring systems. Children thrive in a conducive learning environment which is highly effective and suitable to meet their needs, where the attention to security and safety is always a top priority. For example, cupboards are locked to alleviate the obsessive tendencies of opening and closing doors and staff vigilance, supervision and effective communication using the spoken word and visual cards ensures children are safe. High adult to child ratios are maintained in the setting and on regular outings within the community to local parks, shops or horse riding. Equality and diversity is at the heart of this setting where practitioners have an exceptional understanding of each child's background and needs and successfully help children begin to learn about and understand the world in which they live. The highly successful systems in place ensure the outcomes for children are outstanding in a setting which takes substantial steps in narrowing gaps in children's achievement.

The leadership and management of the setting is inspirational through their drive and passion they enthusiastically and unreservedly demonstrate their commitment to ensure as many children as possible benefit from early intervention and support for complex communication, and autistic spectrum disorders. A meticulous self-evaluation demonstrates the excellent service on offer and inspiring vision, dedication and ambitious forward thinking targets ensure continued improvement. For example, through the Head teacher's forum with other Eagle House Heads, meetings with other professionals and other agencies, the business plan and the Investors in People Assessment review. Exceptional support systems are in place where highly skilled practitioners support one another in identifying the changing demands and implementing effective strategies where they work together seamlessly. The drive, dedication and commitment of the established staff team is clearly visible, where their enthusiasm and high morale is communicated as they express how much they enjoy their work. Effective appraisal systems are in place where the commitment and motivation for further training and professional development is outstanding. A collaborative partnership with parents, carers and other professionals is exemplary, who are invited to attend an intensive two day training programme devised by the staff to develop their knowledge, understanding and how to implement strategies to support the child. Practitioners value and work tirelessly to ensure open honest partnerships with parents in order

to fully meet the needs of the child. Regular reviews with parents, other settings, and local authority and health professionals ensure a cohesive approach. Children are supported and prepared exceptionally well for transitions as initial home visits are made before they begin at the group, and teachers and other professionals visit the setting in preparation for next stages in their learning as they move on from 'the little group'. Parents and carers shared verbally and in writing how thrilled they are with the setting. For example, parents stated 'Individual Educational Plans are pertinent and regularly reviewed and staff pay a great deal of attention to detail ensuring our little boys needs are met, whilst having lots of fun in the process', 'our lives have changed immeasurably for the better since our child started here and their understanding of the world has improved no end' and 'the training they offer is a wonderful way of reaching out to family, friends and professionals'.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Exemplary steps are taken to promote children's health and well-being as practitioners have an accurate understanding of children's complex health and medical needs and meet with other professionals to support children and their families. Practitioners are trained to administer first aid and all required documentation is well maintained. Children benefit from daily opportunities to use the garden and participate in physical activities including daily trips in the community. Although, the outside area is in plans to redevelop as the setting has only recently moved to its new premises. Qualified practitioners ensure all children receive regular massage and reflexology to support their mobility and enhance their acceptance of physical contact and build relationships. Excellent hygiene routines are promoted as anti-bacterial gel is used to clean hands before snacks and meals and high standards of hygiene are effectively in place. Practitioners successfully and sensitively support children with food allergies, intolerances and anxieties about food. School dinners are provided by the neighbouring school who meet any dietary requirements. Healthy eating is promoted in the setting and workshops on healthy eating and food issues are incorporated in the training calendar. Food is often used in exploratory play and children are encouraged and invited to smell, touch or lick in an environment where they can explore under no pressure. For example, a practitioner presented an activity of cutting and squeezing oranges, some children participated with enthusiasm where others become anxious, when presented on a tray some children choose to pour the juice and water in a cup and drink through a straw where another dipped in their finger and licked, praise was offered developing children's self-worth, 'good drinking' and 'good licking'. Children develop a sense of keeping themselves safe through the support they receive and boundaries set by the skills of the practitioners who ensure they communicate in a way the child understands.

Children thrive in an environment where exceptional organisation and structure provide an environment where children can fully engage through the support of expert practitioners. The learning environment is closely monitored in order to maintain controlled levels of distracting sensory information in order to meet

children's needs. The specific curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the children and incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage. Excellent observations and assessments are recorded using the 'the little group' profile where gaps are identified and high levels of support are successfully given to provide exciting new learning opportunities and work through difficulties. Highly skilled practitioners meticulously plan routines and activities which are presented to the child at table or circle time and all steps forward are celebrated and shared with parents developing children's self-esteem. For example, an electronic dancing frog is used to successfully engage children who move towards and sit on stools for circle time. The adult introduces and explains it is Chinese New Year and a member of the class comes from China, she shows a Chinese dragon costume and puts the costume on, she reassures anxious children through constantly reminding that she is underneath. The practitioner puts music on and demonstrates dancing round the circle to the music and then invites children to participate who are praised and encouraged. Children who do not wish to dance are praised for 'good looking'. Children are helped to feel secure and confident through specific routines and structure where children follow adult instruction verbally and non-verbally through visual signs which are used to support children's understanding and communication. Opportunities for free play at the beginning of the session and in the garden or indoor play area enable children to make free choice. Children are skilfully supported to broaden their choices in order to reach their full potential in a setting where each individual is valued, as one parent stated the group had 'completely captivated her imagination and left her bursting with enthusiasm and drive to achieve'. The setting is outstanding, children flourish and enjoy their time at 'little group' making exceptional progress.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

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