

Little Sticks Forest School Greenslate

Unique reference number (URN): 2788171

Address: Greenslate Community Farm, Greenslate Lodge, Greenslate Road, Billinge, Wigan, WN5 7BG

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 03/05/2024

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: Little Sticks Forest School Ltd

Inspection report: 1 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

In most areas of learning, children develop detailed knowledge, such as about early science. For example, from their regular visits to a local beehive, they know that bees collect nectar, which flowers provide. Children understand the importance of the sun and rain for the growth of plants. They learn the words to songs that teach them about the parts of flowers. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face barriers to their learning, generally achieve well.

Generally, children are ready for the next stage in learning and school. They develop physical stamina, coordination and persistence very well. Children, including 2-year-olds bloom with purpose, they understand and use important new words with confidence. Some children develop valuable mathematical language and understanding. On occasion, some younger children develop mathematics knowledge about number less successfully.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that children know the routines very well. They make effective use of the setting's regular call to children to come together for their 'Sticky Feet' activities. They use this coming together, for instance to remind children of how to come together in an emergency and to prepare for what is happening next in the setting's daily routines. Leaders and staff provide children with helpful and gentle guidance on how to behave towards others. For example, they remind children of being kind to each other and use the setting's emotions discs to teach children the words of their emotions, such as angry or happy. This is generally effective in helping children to use words to tell others how they are feeling.

Leaders and staff build warm and nurturing relationships with the children. Staff notice when children need extra help and provide space for them to learn how to calm their emotions. Children know that they can go to the setting's woodland 'Zen Den' for time to think about their behaviour. Mostly, children behave sensibly.

Leaders and staff share their policy for children's attendance with parents and carers. They know each family very well. This helps them to identify individual children's attendance patterns. Leaders know the importance of checking on children's non-attendance at the setting without notification.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders and staff nurture children's belief in themselves. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are relaxed, happy and secure in their positive relationships with each other and staff. Children know how to keep themselves safe, for instance to stay inside the setting's roped-off area of woodland. Due to leaders' well-considered ways of assessing and managing risks, children are confident, adventurous and sensible, such as when they climb trees. Staff supervise children well and give them clear, gentle guidance when needed.

Leaders and staff teach children about the importance of handwashing before eating and after using the toilet. Children know the reasons for washing and clearly state that this is to wash away any germs and to stop them from becoming ill. Mostly, children are independent. Leaders and staff ensure that lunchtimes are a calm and social occasion for children. Leaders provide children with healthy snacks and lots of opportunities to drink water. The setting has started to advise parents and carers about how to provide children with a healthy lunch to bring. This work has not yet had the intended impact to ensure that children's packed lunches are healthy and nutritious. This impacts on some children's awareness of the foods that should be eaten in moderation.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff chart a clear and ambitious path for all children's development and progress. They provide a unique curriculum that identifies what they want children to know and remember. For instance, leaders aim for children to become confident communicators, curious explorers, friendship makers, planet protectors. At this outdoor setting, children spend most of their time learning with staff in the woods. Staff make extra sure that all children, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from the education on offer. Through leaders well-considered curriculum, staff deliberately and carefully inspire children about learning outdoors.

Typically, staff teach children well, for example to listen, talk, run, climb and cooperate with others. They ably teach children to hear the sounds that letters make, such as the initial letter of their names. Leaders ensure that staff use well-chosen books, such as to develop children's understanding about plants, flowers and butterflies. Generally, staff teach children mathematics successfully. Sometimes, mathematics teaching is less well tailored to the needs of younger children, such as in whole group times. This means that, on occasion, some teaching moves on to new curriculum content before younger children understand important number concepts.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately assess children's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known, or previously known, to social care. They make each child's needs and unique talents a priority. They complete the setting's starting information in close work with parents and carers before children start at the setting. Leaders use this information carefully to plan learning and activities that are closely tailored to individual children's needs. Generally, they act to remove anything that gets in the way of children's success. They work closely with external professionals, including education and health specialists and use their guidance to meet the needs of children.

Leaders responsible for the work of SEND, support and coach staff to apply individual learning plans for children. Leaders make effective use of additional funding. For example, leaders purchase books to support children's emotional development, provide training about quality interactions and to enhance individual support for children where needed. Leaders carefully check that this support is having the intended impact to support children's progress.

Leaders provide training for staff to support them in delivering a step-by-step approach to ensure that children receive the right support at in a timely way. Generally, children's SEND

needs are met well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for children, including those with barriers to their learning or wellbeing and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are passionate about providing a fully outdoor education for children. Leaders have a clear understanding of the setting's community of children and family they serve. They work in respectful partnership with parents and carers to determine any barriers that may get in the way of children's learning and work hard to reduce these.

Leaders meet their safeguarding responsibilities and make sure that additional funding is used appropriately to meet the needs of children. Leaders place children at the heart of all decisions they make.

Leaders plant seeds of success in staff's work by providing them with well-thought-out professional learning, such as about children's sensory needs. They provide staff with tailored coaching and mentoring to check the quality of their work. Leaders provide timely feedback so that staff know how to make further improvements in their work with children. Generally, this helps staff to provide the support that children need in their learning. Staff take great pride in being part of the team. They value leaders' approach to ensuring their wellbeing and workload is carefully considered. Staff enjoy the work they do in this woodland setting which impacts positively on the quality of interactions that children receive.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
 - Not met
-

Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
 - Not met
-

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children arrive eager to be with their friends in this woodland setting. They bound into the setting happy and full of enthusiasm for their day ahead, which is full of learning and playing outdoors. Children are confident to leave their parents and carers. Children who find separation from their parents difficult, or those who are new to the setting, are provided with well-considered support, such as settling-in sessions and gentle reassurance from leaders and staff. The more-experienced children remember how they felt when they first joined the setting and confidently offer new children comforting hugs. This helps children to build relationships, settle well and to develop a secure sense of belonging.

Children learn how to make and keep friends. When occasional conflicts arise between children, staff expertly model thinking about each other's feelings. Children learn to adapt to and accept that others may feel differently to themselves. Staff provide careful help to children about naming different emotions and how to negotiate and resolve conflicts between each other. Children ably recall the setting's rules for staying safe in the setting's woodland provision. For instance, they know to tell others to 'watch out' when the woodland swing is in motion to avoid being hurt.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Leaders' carefully thought-out adaptations to teaching and to the outdoor environment helps all children to develop confidence and a willingness to try new things. Children generally achieve well, particularly in their physical and communication skills. They benefit from broad learning experiences that staff provide, such as to visit the farm animals and beehive at the on-site farm. Children grow their own fruit and vegetables in the setting's allotment. Leaders support parents to understand the importance of attendance, so their children benefit from the full learning experiences at this woodland setting.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen teaching of the mathematics curriculum for younger children to secure their understanding of essential concepts before teaching new information.
 - Leaders should further strengthen the already positive partnerships with parents to promote children's good health with regards to healthy food choices.
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About this inspection

The inspectors spoke with leaders, staff, the special educational needs coordinator, and parents and carers and children during the inspection.

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.

Inspectors:

Andrea Vaughan

Michelle Highcock

About this setting

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Wigan
WN5 7BG

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 03/05/2024

Registered person: Little Sticks Forest School Ltd

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours:

Local authority: Wigan

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 1 July 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

2 to 4

Total number of places

20

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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