PlayPals Childcare

Unique reference number (URN): 2835184

Address: St. John's C of E School, Atherton Road, Hindley Green, WIGAN, WN2 4SD

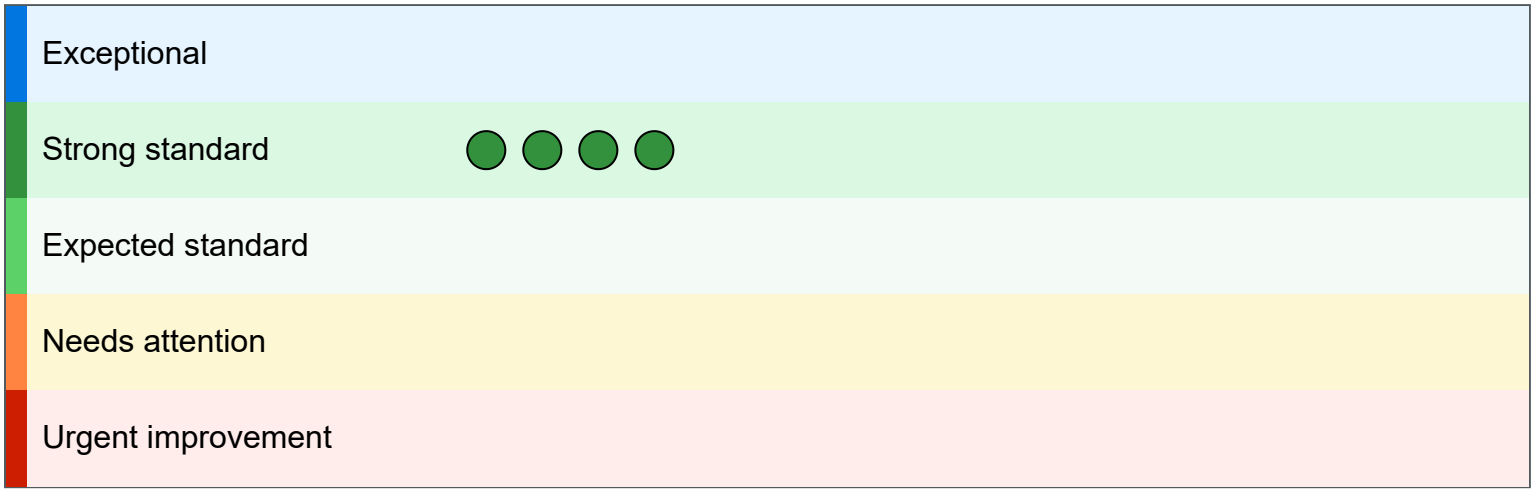
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 04/06/2025

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: Play Pals Childcare Limited

Inspection report: 25 September 2026



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.

Strong standard

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard

Leaders have embedded clear expectations for behaviour and practitioners apply these calmly and consistently. Early years children understand the club's routines and behave well. They settle quickly at register time, move sensibly between activities and independently follow familiar routines, such as washing their hands before eating.

Warm and caring relationships are evident throughout the club. Practitioners model kindness and encourage children to care for one another. Older children naturally offer reassurance and practical help to younger children. This creates a harmonious environment where early years children feel secure and learn to show kindness and respect towards others. Children increasingly apply these expectations themselves. They play cooperatively across the mixed-age group, include others in their play and recognise when their peers need support. Practitioners skilfully use everyday interactions to develop children's understanding of feelings and relationships. As a result, early years children develop positive attitudes towards each other, and increasingly manage social situations successfully.

Practitioners know when children need a different approach. They adapt explanations and reminders according to each child's age, development and individual circumstances, without lowering expectations. This enables early years children to manage routines confidently and participate successfully alongside older children. Leaders promote regular attendance and punctuality and work closely with families to support consistent attendance. This helps early years children establish secure routines and get the most from their time at the club.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard

The club prioritises children's welfare and wellbeing. Practitioners know early years children well and provide care that reflects their age, development and individual circumstances. Warm, responsive interactions help children feel secure and confident to seek support when they need it.

Practitioners actively promote healthy lifestyles. Early years children have access to nutritious snacks and water, and enjoy regular opportunities for energetic physical play. For example, children enthusiastically take part in running games and confidently challenge themselves on the outdoor trim trail as practitioners actively join their play, strengthening children's physical confidence and enjoyment of being active. Practitioners respond when children recognise that they are tired, and use these opportunities to naturally help children understand their bodies and the importance of rest.

Practitioners are responsive to children's emotional needs. They recognise when children need additional reassurance, and provide calm, sensitive support. Children readily seek practitioners for comfort and conversation. This consistent, nurturing care helps early years children feel emotionally secure, develop confidence and thrive at the club.

Everyday routines strengthen children's independence and understanding of self-care. Early years children confidently wash their hands before eating, collect their drinks and clear away

after snack. Practitioners reinforce safe-eating expectations and model good hygiene. For example, they wash utensils that fall onto the floor before returning them to children.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have embedded a highly inclusive culture. They have effective systems to identify and assess children's individual needs, drawing on information from parents, carers, schools and professionals to build an accurate understanding of the support children require. They use this information effectively to plan individualised support and reduce barriers to participation. Leaders know children and families exceptionally well, and act quickly when needs emerge or circumstances change. High expectations remain in place for all children, including early years children, those known to children's social care and those who may face additional barriers.

Leaders use information from parents, carers, schools and professionals to shape individual support. Practitioners respond sensitively when children need extra reassurance or consistency. For example, they adapt support during transitions and settling so that early years children feel secure and can participate successfully. Leaders and practitioners recognise that equality does not mean providing identical experiences. Practitioners adapt communication, explanations and support according to children's ages, development and circumstances. Early years children access the mixed-age provision successfully. Practitioners ensure that experiences remain appropriate for their stage of development while enabling them to participate alongside older peers.

Leaders also consider children's different attendance patterns. They deliberately repeat and adapt activities across the week. For example, they offer creative and physical experiences on different days rather than restricting them to one session. This ensures that early years children who attend on set days do not routinely miss opportunities, and have equitable access to the club's experiences.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the club's strengths and priorities. They actively seek feedback and use it effectively to improve provision. For example, following external quality assurance, leaders introduced a 'now and next' approach to strengthen planning for children's experiences. Leaders embrace feedback and act on it promptly, demonstrating a well-established culture of continuous improvement.

Leaders make thoughtful decisions in children's best interests. They know children and families well, including early years children and those known to children's social care. For example, leaders consider individual attendance patterns when planning activities. They repeat experiences across different days so that children who attend less frequently do not routinely miss opportunities. This promotes equitable access across the club.

Leaders set high expectations for practitioners and maintain effective oversight of practice. Professional learning is purposeful and supports practitioners to develop their knowledge and expertise. Leaders use supervision, professional discussion and feedback to identify learning needs, strengthen practitioners' practice and maintain clear expectations. This

helps practitioners develop their confidence and use their expertise effectively to provide consistently positive experiences for children.

Leaders promote a supportive working culture. Practitioners work collaboratively, understand their responsibilities and seek guidance when needed. Leaders consider practitioners' wellbeing and workload when making decisions. This shared commitment and strong professional culture support consistently positive experiences for children.

Partnership with families is purposeful and well established. Leaders maintain regular communication with parents and carers and value the information they share. For example, they use family feedback to understand changing needs and adapt care and experiences where appropriate. This responsive partnership provides continuity between home and the club, and helps leaders make well-informed decisions for children.

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 are happy, confident and highly engaged at this welcoming club. They arrive eager to take part and quickly become absorbed in activities alongside their friends. Warm, trusting relationships with practitioners help children feel exceptionally secure. Children who need additional reassurance receive sensitive and individualised support, enabling them to join in confidently when they are ready.

Children demonstrate consistently kind and considerate behaviour towards others. Older children instinctively support younger children during routines and play. Practitioners are excellent role models, and successfully encourage children to recognise when others may need help or companionship. Children respond positively, inviting others into their play and showing genuine concern when someone is upset. These highly positive interactions help children develop empathy and ensure that everyone feels valued and included.

Children have a secure understanding of the club's routines and expectations. They behave consistently well, cooperate successfully with others and respond readily to practitioners' calm and skilful guidance. Practitioners use everyday situations effectively to help children reflect on their behaviour, recognise others' feelings and resolve minor difficulties. As a result, children manage social situations confidently and demonstrate a strong understanding of kindness and respect.

Children approach their chosen activities with enthusiasm and sustained interest. They enjoy creative activities, construction, football and energetic outdoor play. Practitioners listen attentively to children's conversations and skilfully build on their spontaneous interests. For example, a discussion about scuba diving develops naturally into a rich conversation about the wider world. Children confidently ask questions, contribute their ideas and know that their interests are genuinely valued.

Children demonstrate high levels of independence throughout the session. They confidently manage familiar routines, including washing their hands, collecting drinks, clearing away after eating and tidying resources. Practitioners have consistently high expectations for children's independence and sensitively judge when support is needed. Children take pride in doing things for themselves and become increasingly confident in managing everyday responsibilities.

Children of different ages form exceptionally positive relationships. They confidently share their interests, engage with practitioners and enjoy spending time together. Children feel safe, valued and secure, and develop a strong sense of belonging at the club.

Next steps

- Leaders should build on their successful work to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by evaluating its impact over time, ensuring improvements have a sustained, transformational effect on children's experiences and outcomes.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with the leadership team, practitioners, children and parents during the inspection.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 to assess the quality and standards of provision 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.

Inspector:
Heidi Kurjan

About this setting

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Address:
St. John's C of E School, Atherton Road
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WIGAN
WN2 4SD

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 04/06/2025

Registered person: Play Pals Childcare Limited

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 07:30 - 08:45,Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 15:15 - 18:00

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 25 September 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

4 to 10

Total number of places

30

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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