

The Croft Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 305366
Inspection date 19/11/2009
Inspector Rachel Ruth Britten

Setting address Gutterscroft Centre, Haslington, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 5RJ

Telephone number 07790 793353

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Croft Pre-School was registered in 1981. The setting is committee run and operates from the Gutterscroft Centre situated in the village of Haslington. Children use all of the open plan centre which is fully accessible. There are secure areas available for outdoor play. A maximum of 24 children aged two to five years may attend the setting at any one time. It is open five days a week from 9.15am to 3pm during term time. Children attend from the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 37 children on roll aged from two to four years. All of these are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting receives funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but no children currently attend who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of staff including the manager. All of these are qualified to level 3 in early years. The setting receives support from the local authority early years advisory team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

All staff recognise the uniqueness of each child and support each one to make sound progress through successful key working in small groups. They provide well for children with a range of individual needs and safeguard children satisfactorily. Overall, partnerships with parents and others work well. The resources, environment and routines facilitate good learning opportunities, independence and health. Shared vision and team working have led to ongoing improvements in the setting and expertise of staff in providing the EYFS, but some requirements for securing the safeguarding of children are not sufficiently organised or put into timely practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- conduct and regularly review risk assessments for the premises and each outing, identifying aspects that need to be checked on a regular basis and noting actions taken to minimise risks (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 19/12/2009
- ensure that registered individuals are vetted through Ofsted and that records are available to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been done on all staff, including the number and issue date of the enhanced 19/12/2009

- CRB disclosure (Suitable people)
- ensure that the stated policies and procedures contain the required details which pertain to the setting and that they are followed in practice, including a complaints procedure and record (Documentation).
- 19/12/2009

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that providers evolve systems to inform those working directly with children that they must declare any matters which may affect their suitability to work with children
- routinely share learning journeys and individual progress reports and plans with parents and others involved in the child's care and learning to maximise consistent and complementary care
- make records current and in daily use, including regular summative assessments and next steps plans to ensure that children's individual learning is best promoted.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Overall, children are suitably safeguarded because staff organise the setting and daily routine with safety in mind and teach children how to take care of their own safety. For example, the beginning and end of sessions, registration and outdoor play opportunities are safe, but well balanced with time for parents to talk to key workers and plenty of choices for children to decide where to play and what to do. However, risk assessments are not conducted regularly or used effectively to support day to day safety and safety on outings. The long-standing staff team is suitably vetted, qualified, trained and aware that they must disclose anything which could call into question their suitability. They are all confident to implement correct safeguarding procedures. However, members of the current parent committee have not yet completed required notifications to Ofsted which initiate their vetting. In addition, systems do not clearly show what checks have been done and when, on all the adults regularly working with children in the setting. Furthermore, appraisals and staff contracts are not conducted regularly, or utilised as opportunities to check the continuing suitability of those working with children. Displayed information and the parent prospectus contain up-to-date policies and procedures, but poor management means that these do not yet contain essential details and remain un-adopted and unpublished. This means that information about who is responsible and what to do about matters such as child protection, health and safety and how to complain, is unclear.

The manager is supportive of each key worker as they develop links with each child and family in their group. Vision and ambition is shared with staff and parents through newsletters, questionnaires, helping in sessions and daily informal contacts. An 'all about me' form is used by the key worker and parent together when a child first starts and helps to establish initial goals for the child's ongoing development. Parents and carers contribute pictures and information for displays

at child height which help children to feel at home in the setting and there is good team working when children need extra professional help, for example, with their speech and language. Relationships with reception teachers are good and transition to school is facilitated well. However, the exchange of information between key workers and parents about their child's individual interests, experiences and progress still does not happen routinely. The learning journey record is not shown to parents regularly or used during sessions to add current observations of progress or to refer to plans for the child's next steps. In addition, the learning record does not contain periodic summaries of a child's progress and plans for their next steps under the six areas of learning. As a result, the records are not yet used to promote consistent and complementary care and learning, in particular when children are concurrently attending other provisions, such as childminders or nurseries.

The staff and manager make satisfactory use of quality assurance documents, such as the Ofsted self-evaluation form, and also new knowledge from ongoing professional training. The manager is undertaking leadership training. They have made satisfactory progress with the recommendations raised at the last inspection, although they do not feel supported by the parent committee to organise, implement and fund some of the improvements they want to make. Nevertheless, the implementation of the EYFS has been beneficial to the outcomes for children. For example, the environment, resources and routine are now very accessible, allowing children to follow their interests, use the outdoors more and create their own play choices. The setting is more welcoming and the routines promote children's sense of belonging as well as providing them with more independence and time to complete their activities.

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

Children enjoy their learning and achieve well in relation to their starting points. This is because the enabling environment and simple routine provide children with good opportunities to choose play materials and follow their individual learning styles. Staff know children's needs well and support their play with skill, weaving in each of the areas of learning. On the inspection day, children choose to play both indoors and out, using balancing and ride-on toys, small world toys, gluing and modelling, role play, sand, water and shredded paper, construction materials and the computer. Small group adult-led activities take place which key workers plan specifically with their key children's needs in mind. These are based on resources which the children are known to be interested in at present and are used to help children take the next steps in their learning. For example, one small group sits with a bowl of water and the jungle animals. They take turns to identify their animal and try to place it into the water without splashing the puppet who is 'watching'. The key worker is using the game as an opportunity for some children to improve their turn taking, speech or small motor control. Children have time to actively pursue their interests and finish their models or role plays because they do not waste time queuing or waiting for everyone because they can come to the snack table when they are ready and can use the toilet and hand washing facilities as appropriate. They make healthy choices of raw vegetables, fruit and crackers

and pour their own drinks of milk or water. Some bring a packed lunch and eat it at the table with their friends at the end of the session, just as it will be when they go to school. As a result, children's health, independence and skills for the future are good.

Children feel secure and safe in the welcoming setting and feel a good sense of belonging, fostered by warm care from staff and good resources. There are pictures of their families, pets and friends displayed around the setting and places where they can find their name and their own coats and bags. Children enjoy interactive stories and circle times when they are welcomed, learn one another's names and talk about their feelings. Children talk together with staff about the seasons, weather and date and what they are going to do today. They use games which consolidate this, such as dressing the teddy in the correct clothes for the weather picture they have chosen. They look at books in small groups and extend their learning about recycling through stories and discussions and using junk to model with. They use cameras, binoculars and magnifiers to examine things like snails they find outside, and they dress in warm coats and wellies when the weather is wet and cold. They dress up as doctors and look after their sick 'patient'.

Children mostly behave well together because they are respected and given real choice and time to finish what they are doing. Adults help them to understand their feelings and those of their friends and offer ideas for compromise and sharing. Staff use many strategies to help children learn to consider one another and make friends. Turn taking, memory and listening games, using musical instruments, story props, puppets and assisting with clearing up, are all developing children's communication, problem solving and understanding of the world, as well as their social skills. Staff praise and enthuse with children, photographing and noting their achievements for their learning record. Children with particular learning needs are catered for well because key workers are skilled and sensitive, using strategies such as traffic light systems and visual timetables to give children time to understand what is happening now and next. One-to-one help, the advice of professionals, and genuine support to parents from key workers ensures that children get the individual help and support they need to make progress, for example with their speech, behaviour, or social skills.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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