

# Lancaster University Pre-School Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Sandra Elizabeth Williams

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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

Lancaster University Pre-School Centre has been registered since 1992 and is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and both parts of the Childcare Register. It is run by Lancaster University and is situated on the university campus, on the outskirts of Lancaster. It operates from eight play rooms and a sensory room in a purpose-built centre. The children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. It is open from Mondays to Fridays from 8.15am until 5.30pm, for 48 weeks of the year.

A maximum of 158 children under eight years may attend the facility at any one time. There are currently 196 children on roll aged from three months to under five years, of whom, 72 are in receipt on funding for early years education. The centre supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. There are 40 members of staff who work with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to a minimum of level 3. They are led by a management team who have attained Level 5 and 6 qualifications and have also attained the Early Years Professional Status. The staff group is working towards the 'Step into Quality' kite mark Quality Assurance Award.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The uniqueness and individual needs of all children are recognised and catered for exceptionally well in this highly effective setting. The extremely motivated and committed staff group make sure that they successfully promote children's safety, welfare and learning to an excellent standard. Children are making impressive progress towards the early learning goals, given their age, ability and starting points. There are extremely good systems in place to ensure that partnerships with parents, other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage and other agencies are exemplary. Managers and staff have a driving ambition for continuous development and are constantly planning and reviewing practices to make further improvements in an outstanding setting. Their thorough self-evaluation makes sure that they are aware of their strengths and that they can identify areas for further development and continuous improvement.

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

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- build upon staffs already effective practice by further developing their knowledge and skills to ensure that the needs of gifted and talented children are fully met, and that challenges are appropriately set to further extend their learning.

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

Children are extremely well safeguarded due to the excellent safeguarding procedures in place. The staff are competent and confident in safeguarding children as they receive regular training and are familiar with the safeguarding policies and procedures. Excellent policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and are shared with parents and staff, who implement them conscientiously. Children are safeguarded by robust recruitment and vetting procedures, including the thorough induction of new staff. All staff and regular visitors have completed criminal records bureau checks, ensuring that they are suitable to work with children. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that the premises is safe and free of hazards. The premises has excellent security systems in place keeping children safe from harm, which reassures parents.

Leaders and managers are exceptionally effective in motivating and inspiring the staff team to work towards continuous improvements and realistic targets. Those in charge have high aspirations for quality through ongoing improvement, clear planning and self-evaluation. Staff, children and their parents are fully involved in evaluating important issues and are proactive in taking forward new ideas and developments. The managers make exceptionally good use of resources, including training opportunities, to meet the needs of the children. Staff morale is very high as they work well together as a team in an extremely positive environment. Processes for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used exceptionally well.

Equality and diversity is completely promoted and embraced by the staff. They are highly effective in ensuring that all children are well integrated and the development of all children in relation to their starting points is very good. The staff work very closely with parents of children who speak English as an additional language and the environment is rich in images, labels and celebration boards reflecting positive messages about cultural diversity. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported by enthusiastic and incredibly motivated staff who are passionate about helping them to achieve to the best of their abilities. This is also enhanced by the excellent relationships developed with other agencies and professionals who visit the centre to work with the children, such as, health visitors, specialist teachers and physiotherapists. Staff also work extremely well with children who are gifted and talented. They get to know the children very well and assess their development closely. Staff have not, however, undertaken specific training in this specialist area, in order to be absolutely sure that the children are receiving sufficient challenges, which will further extend their talents and move their development to the next level.

The staff are highly committed to working in partnership with others who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage and there are well-established channels of communication between all parties in order to consistently promote the children's learning, development and welfare. For children who attend more than one setting, staff use a daily diary called 'Leo and Link Lion' which is successfully used

to share information about children's learning and development. The staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers, who are encouraged to be heavily involved in decision-making on key matters affecting the centre. For example, through well-established and highly inclusive procedures, such as, the Parents Focus Group, which meets termly to discuss the future development of the centre. This group has been influential in recent developments, such as the outdoor area, instigating parents evenings and updating the security system. Parents and carers are very well informed about all aspects of their children's achievement, well-being and development. Parents comment very positively about the high quality care and education provided for their children by a dedicated staff group.

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

Children benefit greatly from attending this welcoming and inclusive environment. The reception area is very bright and welcoming, with comfortable seating areas, colourful displays of children's work and photographs of staff and the children undertaking various interesting activities. This learning environment is very well resourced and effectively meets the needs of all of the children who attend. The individual rooms are extremely well equipped and attractively decorated with the children's art work and photographs which helps them to feel valued and included. The sensory room is an excellent resource and is used effectively to support children develop their senses and provides a calm haven for children to relax. The baby room provides an excellent environment for babies to explore using all of their senses. They benefit from a wonderful range of play equipment, including natural objects in the treasure baskets, which are regularly rotated so that the babies are constantly stimulated and provided with a variety of experiences. The provision of cots, snuggle baskets and sleep dens provide parents with a good choice for their babies to rest and sleep in ways that best suit them.

Children are making impressive progress in their learning and development due to the excellent range of activities that are planned to meet their individual needs and interests. Regular observations and assessments provide staff with information used very effectively to plan for children's next steps. All children, including babies, feel safe and happy as they show an extremely strong sense of security and belonging and develop excellent relationships with staff and their peers. Children display extremely high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they make choices and play exceptionally well independently and with their peers. They show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and apply these in order to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they listen carefully to guidance from adults when using tools and equipment in the forest area, as they toast marshmallows on the camp fire. Children have excellent opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise as they have the freedom to move between the outdoor and indoor areas. They are able to discover and explore the natural environment in the forest area where they learn to use tools and develop new skills in building dens and tying knots.

Children develop exceptionally good skills in information and communication technology due to the wonderful resources such as digital cameras, video cameras,

computers and remote control toys. They develop their mark making skills by using a range of different sources including paints, charcoal, gloop and by waving ribbons in the air. They enjoy a wide range of books and are constantly encouraged to develop their language skills by communicating with the staff and their peers. Children make a positive contribution and learn to appreciate and respect the diverse world we live in. They learn about different cultures by discussing various customs and beliefs, by tasting different types of food and learning languages, such as French. Their creativity is encouraged in many ways, such as, singing, art and crafts, role play and imaginative play. Some children use their imaginations using large wooden blocks to build a car and pretend to drive it.

All children learn to adopt healthy lifestyles and show a very good understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines and they are aware of why they need to wash their hands at appropriate times. They show an excellent understanding of healthy eating, making healthy choices at snack and meal times. They take part in yoga and movement to music sessions and are learning about the effects of exercise on their bodies. Children are learning about sustainability as they grow their own vegetables, recycle items and learn not to be wasteful with resources.

## 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>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</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: Met

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