

# University of Cumbria Pre-School Centre (Lancaster)

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

The University of Cumbria Pre-School Centre is privately owned and has been registered since 1990. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. It is situated within the university campus near to the centre of Lancaster. Facilities comprise of a baby unit, which has one large room, a sensory room, a creative room, a sleep room and an integral kitchen area. The nursery unit has two large rooms and a small quiet room. Children also have access to two secure outdoor areas next to the nursery. Local amenities include use of the sports centre, function hall, library and chapel. A maximum of 56 children in the early years age group may attend the facility at any one time, of whom no more than 12 children may be under two years. There are currently 82 children on roll, of whom approximately 28 are in receipt of funding for early years education.

The facility is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 5.30pm for 49 weeks of the year. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are 18 members of staff who work with the children. All but one on these hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a level 3 qualification. The staff group are lead by two experienced managers who hold masters degrees and one holds the Early Years Professional Status. The assistant manager is working towards a foundation degree in Early Years Education. The pre-school is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and has gained the Quality Counts assurance scheme, which has Investors in Children Accreditation. It has also successfully renewed the Investors in People award in 2007.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The very experienced and skilled staff group have an excellent knowledge of each individual child's needs and interests and they make sure that they successfully promote children's welfare and learning to an excellent standard. Children are safe and secure due to the vigilance of the staff and their expert awareness of safeguarding procedures. Excellent partnerships with parents are well established, and parents comment on the wonderful care provided for their children. The partnerships with other providers of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are strong, thus providing continuity and coherence for children in their development and learning. Children are making impressive progress towards the early learning goals, given their age, ability and starting points. Managers and staff have a driving ambition for continuous development and are constantly reviewing their service in order to enhance the provision. Their thorough self-evaluation makes sure that they are aware of their strengths and 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:

- increasing the frequency of the emergency evacuation drills
- reviewing the storage of children's files to ensure confidentiality.

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

All major aspects of the safeguarding children procedures are exemplary. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the staff at all levels, all of whom receive regular training in safeguarding. Comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently and robustly to ensure any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. Children are safeguarded by robust recruitment and vetting procedures, including the successful induction of new staff. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken and children display an excellent awareness of safety issues and recognise and understand how to keep themselves safe. They practise emergency evacuation drills with staff, however these are not practised regularly enough to ensure all children are fully familiar with the procedure.

Leadership and management is extremely strong. Those in charge have high aspirations for quality through ongoing improvement, clear planning and self-evaluation. This supports continuous improvement that staff, children and their parents have been involved in developing and taking forward. Children's well-being is significantly enhanced by good organisation, risk assessment and planning for continuous improvement. Leaders and managers make exceptionally good use of resources, including training opportunities, to meet the needs of the children. The managers are exceptionally successful in inspiring the staff team to work towards meeting and sustaining ambitious targets. They have high expectations and set high standards which are embedded across all areas of practice. Morale is very high and belief in the setting's success runs through all levels of staff. Processes for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used exceptionally well and systems to support the setting's further development are well established and accepted. Very good liaison with the early childhood lecturers at the university ensures that staff receive an excellent programme of training and ideas for reflective practice and professional development. The staff also work very closely with the early years consultant and enthusiastically embrace any suggestions for further development. As a result, outcomes in children's achievement and well-being are exceptionally high.

There is a strong commitment to equality and diversity. Staff 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 closely with the Equality and Inclusion Officer at the university and literature can be made available for parents who may speak English as an additional language. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported due to the excellent relationships developed with other agencies and professionals.

The staff are highly committed to working in partnership with others who deliver the EYFS and there are well-established channels of communication between all parties in order to consistently promote the children's learning, development and welfare. The staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers, who are encouraged to be heavily involved in decision-making on key matters affecting the pre-school. For example, through well-established and highly inclusive procedures including self-evaluation and the parents and friends group. Children are also involved in this process by contributing their views and suggestions about the pre-school, which they do with confidence. These are actively taken on board by the setting and developed to enhance the provision and improve outcomes for children. For example, the outdoor play area is currently being developed in consultation with the parents and children. Parents and carers are very well informed about all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development, however, the storage of children's files does not sufficiently take into account confidentiality.

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

The pre-school is a highly stimulating and vibrant environment where children thoroughly enjoy learning through play. Furniture, equipment and resources are of high quality and suitable for the ages of children to support their learning and development. The rooms are extremely welcoming, colourful and beautifully decorated with the children's art work and photographs. The sensory room in the baby unit provides an excellent environment for babies and young children to explore using all of their senses. All children, including babies, 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 and are able to 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 safely use a range of tools and equipment, such as scissors.

The exceptional organisation of the educational programmes reflects rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children exceedingly well. Assessments through high quality observations are rigorous and the information gained is used very effectively to guide planning. Teaching is based upon expert knowledge of the learning and development requirements and a full understanding of how young children learn and progress. Enthusiastic and challenging teaching motivates the children to think critically and creatively. Children's progress in communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are exceptionally good due to the resources available and the staff support. They develop very good computer skills as they competently use the keyboard, the mouse and the smart board. They enjoy initiating their own ideas, such as using rulers to measure items and learning the different sizes and shapes of certain items. They learn about volume as they play with the sand and water, filling up the bucket and pouring the sand out. They learn about shapes and sizes, such as big and little circles as they make Christmas decorations. They enjoy a wide range of

books and mark making materials and are constantly encouraged to develop their language skills by communicating with the staff and their peers.

The children's creativity is encouraged through the good choice of materials and they enjoy creating their 'winter wonderland' dens, using paints and shiny paper to decorate them. The children learn about the diverse world we live in as they enjoy learning other languages, such as Spanish. They also learn about different customs, such as discussing the types of food eaten at Eid and the types of costumes worn during weddings. Children have very good opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and outdoors. Their physical development is encouraged during the action songs and dance sessions as well as the regular outdoor play. Their fine motor skills are developed as they play with malleable materials, such as flexi-foam and as they paint with paint brushes. All children show a very good understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines and they show an excellent understanding of healthy eating, making healthy choices at snack and meal times. Children are learning about sustainability as they start to grow their own vegetables, use the compost bin and recycle items such as plastic cups. Children make a positive contribution as they are involved in fundraising events for various charities and help to support an orphanage in Madagascar. Overall, children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the setting they are in.

## 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	2
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	2
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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