

Potters Cross Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Webb

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Potters Cross Pre-School playgroup opened in 1970 and operates from the Methodist Church Hall in the village of Kinver, South Staffordshire. It has use of the hall and two additional rooms. There are local shops, a park and a school within walking distance. It is a registered charity managed by a board of trustees. There is also a voluntary committee made up of parents of the children at the playgroup and members of the local community. The group operates each weekday, from 9.00am to 12 noon, term time only.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children in the early years age range at any one time. There are currently 56 children aged from two years to five years on roll. Children come from the local area. The group supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The group employs seven members of staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a foundation degree in early years studies. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children attending this setting receive excellent support in their development and learning. They are highly valued and respected by the committed and very caring staff who relish the roles they play in enhancing opportunities and experiences for children to gain skills for life. The leadership and management of the setting is extremely pro-active and wholly committed to constantly evaluating the impact the practice has on improving outcomes for children. Management and staff continually seek to develop their practice and in this their efforts are highly commendable and effective.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improving the free-flow play opportunities for children with the provision of on-site outdoor play facilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The attention given to ensuring children's safety and well-being is extremely rigorous. Robust procedures are in place for the recruitment and selection of staff supported by the board of trustees that is fully aware of its roles and

responsibilities in ensuring ongoing suitability of the adults working with the children. Staff are fully supported in their professional development ensuring that children benefit from the training, experience and commitment the staff bring to enhance their learning and development. Procedures for safeguarding children are extremely effective and each member of staff is fully aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance to be followed should they have any concerns about a child in their care. Children's welfare and safety is further promoted through the diligent attention given to ensuring the environment is safe and that any hazards are identified and minimised. Staff make highly effective use of records such as accidents and risk assessments to collate and identify issues that may impact on children's safety.

This setting demonstrates a very strong commitment to promoting opportunities for every child to make strong progress in their development and learning. Staff have explored a range of strategies to enable every child to contribute to their activities including non-verbal communication, accessibility of resources and the layout of the setting. For example, pictorial time-tables and the use of the Picture Exchange Communication symbols (PECS) assist in every child being enabled to develop their communication skills. They are very ably assisted by staff who work extremely effectively with other professionals and parents and carers to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach is implemented to enable each child to reach their full potential. This also demonstrates the setting's awareness and understanding of the merits of fostering positive relationships with parents, carers and other providers. Parents and carers express their delight at the progress their individual children are making in the setting. They speak knowledgeably about the Early Years Foundation Stage and how they are actively involved in contributing to their child's progress. Parents make comments such as having 'the utmost trust' in the organisation and staff in providing the 'fun-filled, safe and loving environment' where their children blossom. They express much satisfaction in being involved in the 'Letters and Sounds' project which is part of a long-term study into children developing early communication skills and the impact of this on their future learning. Such strategies demonstrate the value placed on the whole family and how children's learning and development is a true partnership. The arrangements for children's transition to other settings and full time school are excellent in reassuring both parents and children of how this is a milestone in their lives. Teachers from the school visit the setting and reciprocal visits are undertaken to ensure children are familiar with the new environment and that their levels of attainment are shared to inform the individualised planning for the future.

Every aspect of the operation of this setting is continually scrutinised, evaluated and assessed in order to prioritise and bring about improvement. For example, plans are in place to develop an outdoor play area on site and extend the opportunities for children to engage in free-flow play. Staff take time at the end of every session to discuss how the morning went and how each child has engaged in the activities on offer. The formal self-evaluation has involved the trustees, staff, parents and children in the process. For example, a parent suggested introducing Makaton sign language and children are now using it to illustrate some songs for their forthcoming end of term concert. A child has requested that a book about 'lightning' be added to the book corner. The highly skilled and experienced manager works tirelessly along with her enthusiastic and passionate team to

ensure that every child has the best possible start to their early years development and learning. This is borne out by a parents' comment that their child has 'been filled with so much self-belief and confidence'.

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

Children are extremely eager to come to the setting where they are nurtured, valued and respected. Each morning the door opens and they dash in, register themselves recognising their names or symbols and immediately settle to well-planned activities. Staff have embraced the Early Years Foundation Stage understanding how the framework has enabled them to build further on their highly dedicated and professional practice to enhance the outcomes for children outlined in the Every Child Matters Agenda. Through the constant evaluation of practice recent changes have been made to the methods of recording and assessing children's progress to collate the next steps for each child. Staff fully comprehend how children learn and use every opportunity as a chance to extend children's critical thinking, knowledge of their world and thereby develop skills for the future. For instance, whilst standing in line to go and play on the field, the mention of two children's names beginning with same letter is seized by a member of staff to sow the seeds of alliteration, drawing children's attention to the similarity in sounds. Parents are able to look at children's developmental records at any time and many cite their confidence in approaching their child's key worker to discuss any issues, concerns or share achievements from home at any time. They actively contribute their comments when more detailed reports are given and they are presented with a very personal record of their child's time at the pre-school, a clear indication of how their child has progressed.

Children's communication, language and literacy development is highly promoted. They delight in accessing the books freely and staff make very good use of props and resources to engage some of the younger children, developing their levels of concentration. They enjoy the phonics sessions they have, particularly as parents attend and follow through with some ideas at home. Some children write their names and simple words competently and all children engage in activities that increase their awareness of writing having meaning as they look at labels, signs and posters around the setting and write out shopping lists. Many children count confidently and some older, more able children are beginning to develop a concept of calculation as they consider how many cups and plates are required at snack time, discuss pairs when holding hands with their partner and match dolls clothes to the right size doll. Excellent opportunities are used to develop a strong sense of their place in the local community and the wider world. Children are working on a display that is a 3D map of the village, recognising the specific landmarks and adding their own homes and dwellings to the work. Once completed, the work is to be displayed in the village library. Wider awareness is promoted as children celebrate various festivals linked to the diverse cultures in the world. They access genuine artefacts and musical instruments to gain accurate information about different lives and one child recalls how hard it was to get a sound out of the didgeridoo when they were looking at Australia. They also recognise the Chinese writing on the delivery truck in the village, recalling the Chinese New Year

celebrations.

Despite the lack of an outdoor play area directly on site, children still have ample opportunities to develop their physical skills both in the hall and by visiting the nearby playing field. They learn to balance, jump and run, clambering up the bank as they learn about differing heartbeats when exercising. Children's creative development is extremely well fostered. They show great imagination with and without resources re-enacting incidents, stories and ideas in role play. A group of two- and three-year-olds plan and engage in a 'trip to the seaside' using no resources other than their own creative imagination. They pack the beach bags, don their swimming costumes and dive into the waves with gusto. Staff engage in this at the children's request and extend their thinking and learning through effective but playful questioning.

Children's safety and welfare are wholly promoted. They understand the importance of following good hygiene practices and well-qualified staff attend to their health needs and minor accidents with skill and sensitivity. Tucking into their snacks, children become aware of the merits of healthy eating and have opportunities to gain independence in spreading cheese on crackers or enjoying fromage frais as alternatives. Any specific dietary or health requirements are fully adhered to in order to maintain children's good health. Children are aware of their own safety and that of others. One child reminds a visitor about needing to wear the high visibility jacket before crossing the road to play in the nearby field. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Parents are reassured of how staff manage behaviour in the setting, reminding them of how children can experience intense emotions at times and require sensitive support in learning to cope with such feelings. Children are encouraged to develop kindness and a willingness to share. They use good manners as a matter of course, taking their lead from the excellent role models offered by the staff.

Children cannot fail to thrive in this extremely effective provision where the management and staff team works tirelessly to offer rich and highly stimulating experiences delivered with passion, professionalism and a strong commitment to ensuring that every child does matter.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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