

St Agnes Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 306490
Inspection date 21/09/2010
Inspector Christine Stewart

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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

St Agnes Pre-school is a privately owned group managed by an informal partnership. It was registered in 1981 and operates from the hall of St Agnes Church in West Kirby, Wirral. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am until 12.00noon, and Tuesday to Thursday from 1.15pm to 3.45pm, during school term times. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from two to under five years on roll, of whom 36 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff. Five staff, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The dedicated, motivated, well qualified staff team provide a safe environment and offer a wide and interesting range of play and learning opportunities for children both inside and outside. This means all children irrespective of their age, ability and starting points, have fun, thrive and make excellent progress in their learning and development in this inclusive and welcoming environment. Partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals are well established and contribute to ensuring that each child's needs are well met. The systems used for self evaluation demonstrate they are effective in their capacity to bring about improvements which make the setting outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the quiet area

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership of the pre-school is outstanding. Robust systems, policies and procedures ensure that children are safe and secure at all times. All required consents are obtained and maintained to safeguard children's welfare. Information including any special dietary requirements or allergies is known and recorded to

keep children safe. A rolling programme for staff to attend training is in place. This ensures that staff are up to date and informed about safeguarding issues and practise. Staff recruitment procedures and staff reviews are thorough to ensure adults working with children are fit and continue to remain suitable to work with them. Risk assessments are conducted and recorded and include daily risk assessments of the premises before and during the session to provide children with safe areas to play and explore. Children are encouraged to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, when they practice the emergency evacuation process and tidy equipment away.

This is a pack-a-way group which means most days the areas have got to be set up at the start of the session and cleared away at the end. Excellent organisation of the premises inside and outdoors, and the equipment, is a testimony of the staff's commitment and dedication to providing children with the best possible environment. This good organisation of space and resources, and the effective deployment of staff, promotes children's opportunity to become inquisitive, independent learners. The organisation of routines such as, snack time, story-time and plans for free choice play provide a good balance of activities which are adult and/or child-led. A key worker system is in place however, all the staff have an excellent understanding of the needs and abilities of all children who attend so observations and assessments extend beyond being just the child's key worker's responsibility. Staff's sound understanding of the Early Years Framework and secure knowledge of how children learn ensure children's time at the setting is fun and purposeful.

Partnership with parents and carers is a key strength of the setting. When children start at the setting staff gather information from parents to ensure they know how best to support children's learning and enjoyment. Various formal and informal methods of exchanging communication are in place to ensure ongoing information is shared. Parents and carers are kept informed of children's learning and development through learning journals, diaries, parent's night and homework tasks. Early Years Foundation Stage information is displayed on notice boards, included in parent's information and discussed at length at parent's evenings. Staff value the children and are committed to providing an inclusive environment. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are exceptionally well supported. This is achieved because staff work closely in partnership with parents, carers and professionals to co-ordinate the support in order that it fully meets the child's needs. Parents and carers are very keen to express their absolute satisfaction with every aspect of the provision and felt their children benefited from an excellent provision with wonderful staff.

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

Children are happy and fully occupied in this stimulating setting. The staff are proud of the highly inclusive atmosphere they create as this ensures that every child participates fully in all activities. Children respond well to staff expectations of behaviour and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, whether playing

independently or in groups. Staff extend children's creative and physical skills, their problem solving skills and their understanding of the world as they participate in a range of activities which are suitable for their age and development stage. Most of the older children are competent in recognising number and letters. They collect their names and observe labels and print, and they are excited as they identify the letter that represents their name when playing with the laminated flash cards. Children engage in lively conversation with staff and happily explain what ingredients they have used to make the curry. They share books and demonstrate they understand the humour in the story 'There's shark in the park' by their lively response to the story. No learning opportunities are missed here. Before going outside to play children have to put on their outdoor clothes they select and slip on boots, decide if they need an umbrella, a hat, or coat, all of which supports their skills of independence, confidence and self care. All children have great fun in the superb outdoor area where their learning is extended and they can enjoy challenges. Children dig in the soil and explore in the logs to find and identify insects living there. They learn about volume, size and weight as they fill and empty containers with sand and soil and develop their imaginations as they make mud pies and curry in the outside home corner. Children explore how things work when they place buckets of sand and soil in the basket of the make-shift pulley and hoist the materials up and down with glee. They express their creativity as they paint and mix colours, excited at their results. They model make with junk and discuss their design with their peers and with staff. They explore sound using instruments, listening to the wind chimes and using the head phones, which they operate themselves.

They have plenty of opportunity to develop physical skills indoors and outside as they handle tools, such as, rolling pins and cutters to shape dough, and they have spades and buckets to dig in the soil and sand. They have excellent opportunities to climb, run, swing and exercise. They can take risks as they climb the rope ladder and swing on the tree swing. They can scamper up the raised outside play areas, ride cars, use slides, kick balls enjoy space and fresh air. They learn about the food chain as they grow herbs and produce in their garden. They are developing an understanding of nature as they place nesting boxes in the garden to encourage birds into the area. They recognise the weather as they decide what to put on to play outside and enjoy activities directly prompted by the weather systems. For example, firstly making and then flying kites on a windy day. This understanding and enjoying of nature encourages children to develop an awareness of sustainability.

Children develop healthy lifestyles as they move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. They talk about why they need to wash their hands so they begin to understand the reasons for good personal care, not just the routines to promote their welfare. They enjoy nutritious and fun snacks as they place the apples in the juicer, turn the machine on and then, when ready, pour the juice carefully into their cup. They help themselves to oranges, effectively using the presser to squeeze all the juice and enjoy their drink. They consider if they are hungry before they pour out a bowl of cereal or opt for a piece of toast and sit in a small social group enjoying their breakfast. Staff oversee the process and enable children to be as independent as they are able to be and they use their knowledge of the children to know the level of support each child may require.

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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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

| | |
|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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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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