

Tugboats Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	315253
Inspection date	19/01/2011
Inspector	Denise Sixsmith

Setting address	Quays Community Centre, 233 Thelwall New Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2XT
Telephone number	01925 497580
Email	
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

Tugboats pre-school is operated by a committee and opened in September 1997. It operates from a small community room with its own independent entrance within The Quays Community Centre in Grappenhall, South Warrington. The pre-school opens each weekday from 9.15am to 11.45am and 12 noon to 2.30pm for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age range. There are currently 44 children under five years of age on roll. The pre-school is registered to provide care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age range. The pre-school employs six members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification. The pre-school is also registered by Ofsted on both parts of the Childcare Register and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children settle with ease in the welcoming and inclusive environment of the pre-school. They benefit from having their individual needs met effectively by staff who take time to form positive relationships with all children and their families. There is a strong sense of purpose and commitment within the team of motivated and enthusiastic staff who work very well together. The manager and staff continuously evaluate their practice and are confident about what the setting needs to do to improve further. Close links with parents ensure that they are kept well informed about their children's progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop systems further to enhance the flow of information of children's learning and development with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- improve the systems for the organisation of the setting by developing the use of self-evaluation through seeking input from parents, children and others to support ongoing improvements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are committed, enthusiastic and skilful practitioners. They follow effective procedures to safeguard the children in their care. Required records, policies and

procedures are in place. There is a clear line of responsibility for reporting concerns about children's welfare and staff are clear about their duty to report such concerns. All members of staff have undertaken in-house or induction training and the nominated staff for child protection have attended relevant training. The premises are kept secure and all visitors to the setting are asked to sign in. Risk assessments are in place and relevant action is taken to minimise the risks to children while at the pre-school. Staff are mindful of children's safety, they supervise them well and give clear guidance to minimise risks, for example, reminders about walking indoors and how to play carefully on the outside equipment.

Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff who are supported and encouraged to fully develop their skills through ongoing training. Good arrangements are in place to ease the transition when children move on to school, however, links with other providers who share care for the children are not always maximised. Children who need additional support receive good, sensitive care. This is agreed in partnership with their parents and other professionals to ensure they are fully included and their needs met. As a result, all children take part in the full range of activities with their friends. Staff are effectively deployed within the pre-school which is well organised with different areas of play set out to enable children to make free choice. The management and staff have a positive approach to continuing improvement and have produced a detailed self-evaluation system, however, this does not currently fully utilise input from others. The recommendations set at the last inspection have been implemented to improve the learning opportunities and the welfare of the children.

Staff have a good knowledge of the children's families and backgrounds. Regular newsletters, diaries and ongoing daily discussions ensure that parents are informed about the pre-school activities and their children's welfare. Parents and carers are encouraged to 'stay and play' with their children for a session. In addition they are invited to share any interests or skills that they have with the children in planned sessions such as gardening, singing or baking. Parents spoken to are all very supportive of the pre-school and the warm, caring, approach of the staff. They all value the staff's commitment to ensuring their children receive good quality care and learning and thoroughly enjoy themselves whilst there.

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

The staff are extremely successful in providing a warm and welcoming environment in which every child matters. Children benefit greatly from the relaxed atmosphere and a structure which resembles that of a large and happy family unit. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves, others and the environment. Staff engage well with the children and develop positive relationships. They praise children's achievements, which motivates them to learn and develop positive self-esteem. An effective key person system enables parents to feel confident and children to feel safe while they are there.

Children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. They are happy, settled and eager to learn and frequently help to organise their own play. Staff are on hand to support and enhance learning opportunities as they arise. Clear observations are made and the key person makes the child's learning journey record and contributes to planning to make sure all children receive good support. Children chatter freely as they know staff value them and will listen to what they say. Staff ask clear questions to encourage them to talk, children listen intently to favourite stories and contribute ideas. Effective questioning techniques by staff extend children's learning and thinking skills.

Well set out areas of learning ensures that the children can engage in a variety of play across all the areas of learning. They are good at mark-making, for example, they make shopping lists in the play shop and write their names on their artwork. Larger scale mark-making is undertaken by children on the white boards and chalk boards, which are available in both the inside and outside areas. Colourful chalk mark making produced by the children decorates the internal walls of the outdoor play chalet. Children confidently find their name cards as they arrive at the group and use them to indicate that they have had their snack. The good labelling around the room in different languages promotes all children's awareness of letters and numbers. Children enthusiastically engage in large scale outdoor water play. They know that they have to 'suit and boot' to ensure that they remain dry as they fill a variety of large and small containers with a hose pipe and empty them into buckets, piping or onto the garden area. Children problem solve well as they work together to construct elaborate wooden brick towers and bridges. They use numbers regularly during all aspects of their play and daily routine. Their awareness of the wider world is extended in a number of ways, for example, through the contributions of various visitors to the setting, daily resources and involvement in a range of activities which look at different cultures from around the world. They follow the very good examples set by staff and as a result, they are extremely well-behaved, polite, kind to one another and learn right from wrong. Consequently, children are developing good skills for the future and a strong sense of belonging.

Children learn to be safe through play and discussion. Safety helmets are included in the play equipment and regular evacuation drills are held, to ensure that children and staff know what to do in the event of a fire or an emergency. Children are developing a good awareness of the importance of following appropriate hygiene procedures to maintain their good health. They wash their hands thoroughly at appropriate times without prompting from adults and help themselves to drinks of water throughout the session. Children develop independence and social skills very well, as they choose to eat their snack at a time that best suits their needs. They readily enjoy a range of snack items that promote healthy eating such as bananas and grapes, with a choice of milk or water to drink.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	2
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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	2
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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