

Ancaster Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	18/05/2011
Inspector	Anne Barnsley
Setting address	The Parish Hall, Ancaster, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG32 3PW
Telephone number	0781 481 9137
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*.

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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

Ancaster Pre-School Playgroup is a committee run group that was first established in 1968. The group operate from the parish hall in the centre of Ancaster. The group have the use of the foyer, main hall, kitchen, toilet facilities and a storage cupboard. There is an enclosed outdoor play area attached to the building. The majority of the children live in the village, however, it also serves some of the surrounding rural villages and some children attend from as far away as Grantham.

The group is open each weekday during the school term from 9.15am until 12.15pm. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register for 26 children and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 26 children on roll. This includes 16 children in receipt of nursery education funding for three- and four-year-olds. The setting represents children with special educational needs, but currently has no children on roll with disabilities or who speak English as a second language.

There are four permanent members of staff, all of whom have relevant early years childcare and education qualifications. The manager has a qualification at level 4 and is working towards an early years degree. There is a bank of relief staff available to provide cover for unexpected events or additional support when this is needed. The group receives support from the local authority and is member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and a registered charity.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this setting and make rapid progress in their learning and development. Highly effective partnerships are securely established with parents and other professionals involved with the children. These ensure children's individual needs are met and their protection assured. The management and organisational systems are robust. Self-evaluation is highly reflective and improvements are continuous and driven. Targets are clearly identified and extremely well prioritised.

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 the outdoor area further by increasing the existing range and variety of natural resources to further support children's innovation and creativity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and well-being is clearly prioritised as paramount in this setting as all staff have an excellent understanding of their duty to safeguard children. They are well trained to recognise the signs of a child at risk and there is a designated member of staff in place with specialised knowledge and responsibilities for safeguarding. Exemplary partnerships are established with other agencies and these fully ensure that children and families receive high levels of support when this is needed. Comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently and robustly to ensure that any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. Detailed risk assessments and daily safety checks are completed to ensure the environment and resources are safe. Effective safety measures are in place and the supervision of children is vigilant. All persons who have regular contact with children are appropriately vetted for their suitability.

Leaders and staff at all levels have high aspirations for quality through ongoing improvement and a strong commitment to equality and diversity. The committee, staff, parents and children all contribute to self-evaluation. This is an exceptionally reflective and inclusive tool that is updated regularly to show how the setting has moved forward and what their next targets for development are. The two recommendations that were raised at the last inspection have been successfully met along with a significant number of other self-identified improvements. To name but a few; these include improvements to the environment, both indoors and outdoors, the routine of the day, all policies and procedures and the systems for observing children and progressing them with their learning and development.

Staff continuously update their training so that they have a diverse range of skills and knowledge that they cascade to each other. The committee and staff team are extremely united and work exceptionally well in partnership. They show high levels of commitment without compromise. They overcome many logistical problems that arise from imposed restrictions that are placed on them in shared premises. They find solution after solution to make things work the best they can for children. For example, they have to set out and clear away all resources everyday, including those in the outdoor area. They have mastered this to a fine art because they are highly organised and work extremely well as a team. They can not set out everything on offer every day so they rotate resources. They ensure, through the choices they make, that all areas of learning are covered so that children have diversity and dimension in their play. They have developed the outdoor area by fundraising and having a soft surface put down. As they can not have permanent fixtures outdoors such as drain pipes, musical instruments and dens for the children, they have devised their own way of attaching these things to the fence and providing children with resources to make their own dens. The absence of a growing area has been overcome by buying troughs and pots so that children can grow plants and vegetables. Some further development has been agreed at this inspection, which is to obtain more natural resources for the outdoor area such as crates, planks and tyres to further support children's innovative and creative learning. This is by no means a significant weakness that impacts negatively on the children, but one that the staff are already aware of and are working towards

solving. These examples only demonstrate some of the improvements the setting has made and some of the solutions they have found. The staff show a relentless approach to driving improvement. They are highly motivated and have a considerable passion for providing the best experiences they can for their children. This shared vision and enthusiasm demonstrates a strong capacity to improve and to maintain exceptionally high standards of quality.

The setting is highly committed to working in partnership with others and takes a lead role in establishing working relationships. There are well-established channels of communication between all partners involved with individual children, which successfully promotes their learning, development and welfare. Children are extremely well supported with their transition to other settings and the excellent exchange of information that takes place ensures that they have continuity in their learning. Purposeful information is gathered from parents about their child's individual needs. Settling-in periods enable children to develop a strong sense of belonging and for the staff and parents to work together to identify and meet any emerging needs that a child may display. Parents are provided with excellent information about the activities their child has been involved in and also have excellent opportunities to contribute to their child's learning.

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

This is an exceptionally stimulating, vibrant and welcoming environment, which fully reflects children's backgrounds and the wider community. Children thrive and make significant gains in their learning and development. They play a dynamic role in the setting and offer their ideas and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration and have an excellent balance between adult-led and child-led activities. Children make excellent use of a wide range of equipment, including electronic resources and technology. They are confident, active participants in their learning as they make their own choices from an exceptionally well-resourced environment. The staff have an excellent knowledge of how young children learn and a natural ability for working with children at their level. They demonstrate an expert knowledge of the learning and development requirements and a full understanding of how to facilitate children's preferred learning styles. The exceptional organisation of planned activities reflects rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet all the children's needs very well. An example of this was observed at the inspection where children were enthralled by the visitors who had been asked to come from Book Start. They come to the setting dressed up as pirates. Children read pirate stories and make pirate hats and telescopes. They really enjoy making the sounds that pirates make and changing their names to 'Pirate Richard' or 'Pirate Susan', for example. They then have a further memorable experience, which they are so excited about. This is meeting Big Bear, who is an enormous big, blue bear who is very shy and needs encouragement to come into the room. The pirates gently call to Big Bear and eventually he is brave enough to come in to say 'hello'. Children are amazed at how big he is and laugh and squeal when the lady tells them he was also very wide; to which Big Bear bends over and wiggles his bottom at the children. They ask Big Bear to do this over and over

again and really enjoy trying to cuddle him and stroke him.

Assessments through high quality observations are rigorous. The information that is gained is translated effectively into planning for children on an individual basis. Planning is skilfully arranged to incorporate all areas of learning through activities that link to each other and consolidate children's learning. For example, children's learning and experiences that are sent from home are incorporated into their learning journeys so that planning for children takes full account of the 'whole child'.

Children are supported extremely well and grouped into small numbers that match their age or stage appropriately. They all have the same opportunities and activities, but these are tailored to their individual needs, for example, at story time the three groups have a different level of story that compliments their understanding and concentration level. Children are articulate and confident communicators. They have wonderful imaginations and use these extremely well in their play. They build bridges on blue mats and pretend that the mat is the water full of sharks and crocodiles. They draw pictures of volcanoes and talk about how it is going to explode and describe how all the fire is coming out of the top. At the same time another child picks up the telephone and frantically presses the buttons shouting 'fire, fire' down the phone and saying 'we have to get away from the fire now as they are coming to put it out'. This is cooperative play at its best and also shows that children have a well-developed understanding of safety and what to do. Further to this children make their views very well known in many ways and are excellent negotiators. One child is clearly unimpressed when he goes to the water dispenser and sees that all the cups have been used up. He very quickly lets a member of staff know by holding up the tray to her and saying 'look there are no cups'. During snack time a member of staff introduces the pirate ladies and suggests to the children that after snack, because they are going to have some wonderful pirate stories, that it might be a good idea if they all gather on the carpet. One child asks 'but what about outdoor play?' The member of staff says that they will still be doing that, but that it will be in a different order today as they have visitors with very special things for the children to do. After a little thought the child suggests, 'yes, but if we go outside the pirate ladies can come too'.

Children benefit greatly from the wealth of visitors who are invited to the setting. They learn a great deal about the community they live in when farmers bring their tractors for the children to see and the police, fire and local vet come to the setting. A lady brings her pony for children to have pony rides and another visitor brings lambs, calves and chicks for the children to see. In addition to this the children also have pet days where they bring their own pet from home. Children learn a lot about each other and develop a respect for each others differences and an ability to value these differences and their shared experiences.

Children have excellent relationships with the staff and conversations are rich and meaningful. Children ask questions with confidence and they are given clear and understandable answers. Their thinking is further challenged by the staff who ask them to think about what should happen next, how would they like to do things, what are their views. For example, a group of children who are playing in the bubble water washing a member of staff's arms know that putting more washing

up liquid in the water makes more bubbles and by blowing in it with the straws they make the bubbles grow. One child decides she wants to wash herself and is encouraged to think about what she needs to do first. She realises she has to take off her apron so that she can remove her cardigan first as her sleeves keep falling down.

Children show that they are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have healthy snacks of fruit, which they thoroughly enjoy and plenty of milk and water to drink, which they pour by themselves. They develop an excellent understanding of taking care of their personal needs such as using the toilet and washing their hands. They have a portable sink in the play room which they use independently before snack time to wash their hands and they all know to put their paper towels into the bin next to the sink. They show a strong sense of security in the setting and an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected. They are very polite, saying 'excuse me, please' and 'thank you' and they are extremely helpful and cooperative. They look after their toys and resources well and are kind and considerate to each other. They have plenty of physical exercise and fresh air through regular outdoor play, walking to other settings and to places of interest in the community. Children play a full and active role in their learning and are very well equipped with the fundamental skills they need for their future.

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

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

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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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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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