

Whalley Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Jennifer Kennaugh

Setting address	Whalley Adult Education Centre, Station Road, Whalley, Clitheroe, BB7 9RH
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Whalley Pre-School Playgroup has been registered since 1993 and is run by a voluntary committee. The playgroup operates from a rented hall within Whalley Adult Education Centre, a listed building close to the centre of Whalley, near Clitheroe, in Lancashire. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. Sessions are offered term time only from 9am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday for children aged three to four years old. Children aged two to three years old can attend from 12.30pm to 3pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, again term times only.

There is a secure play area within the grounds of the Education Centre, a short walk from the building. This was funded through grants and created by the playgroup. Children come from the local and wider community and the setting supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are seven staff in total, of which six hold relevant early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and belongs to the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The playgroup promotes children's welfare and learning well, so they experience positive outcomes. Staff have a thorough knowledge of children and plan their next steps in learning effectively, although, this is not documented in a way that reflects the detailed records of progress held. The setting is inclusive and welcoming, so children are happy and settled. There are strong partnerships with parents who are involved in the setting on many levels, however, there are currently no systems in place for them to contribute to children's records of progress. The playgroup forms positive links with other agencies, settings and professionals to meet children's needs. The staff and committee undertake critical evaluation to continuously improve provision, however, some paperwork related to premises is not always kept up to date.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that emergency evacuation practises are recorded in the fire drill book each time, with any problems encountered
- develop systems to plan specific activities for individuals based on all six areas of learning
- develop ways for parents to contribute to their children's learning records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well protected in the setting because staff have regular safeguarding training. Highly comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to ensure children's safety, including well-organised induction for new staff and volunteers. All staff and committee members have been vetted as being suitable for work with children. Efficient risk assessments, geared to the needs of a 'pack up' setting are used effectively to keep children safe, allowing them to move freely around the playroom and enjoy well-supervised outdoor activities.

The playroom is spacious and an extensive range of indoor activities is offered, in spite of the daily requirement to completely pack away. Staff are deployed in a way to ensure that an adult-led activity is ongoing whilst the other staff are free to move between activity areas making them available to meet welfare and learning needs in child-initiated play. Staff are knowledgeable about individual children's development and maintain detailed records for the six areas of learning for each child, although, there is currently a lack of documentation to demonstrate planning for individuals' next steps towards the early learning goals. The setting has detailed planning sheets for each activity offered as part of their continuous provision, so that holistic development is promoted. The setting secured funding then built a secure outdoor play area within the grounds of the centre. Staff have imaginative and realistic plans for its use to enhance outcomes for children, including forest school and nature based activities. Training for staff is a priority, being based on staff development needs and those of children in the setting or about to enter it, to improve welfare and learning. The playgroup uses resources well to promote equality and diversity, including visitors, to extend children's knowledge of the wider community and cultures.

The playgroup has strong links with parents, who are a well-used resource providing feedback on practice and offering their skills, time and knowledge, whether they are on the committee, volunteering or giving talks to the children to extend their knowledge of the world. Parents are enthusiastic in their praise of the setting. They feel well informed about their children's progress at playgroup through a variety of means, although, there are currently no opportunities in place for them to contribute to learning records.

The setting forms effective links with other professionals, settings and agencies, in order to meet the needs of individual children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. At transition times, staff from local schools are welcomed into the setting to observe children and information transfer is well organised to promote continuity of provision for children entering their final Early Years Foundation Stage year at primary school. The playgroup is currently working towards a quality assurance scheme to demonstrate areas of strong practice and those where it could improve.

Generally good use of documentation and management training ensures that the playgroup is sustainably run and that children make comprehensive progress in their learning, although, some paperwork is not always up to date with regard to

premises, specifically, evacuation drill records for the summer term of 2011. Overall, the playgroup shows a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement, as a result of highly committed staff, management and parents, who have already implemented ambitious development plans whilst facing the challenge of a setting within a listed building.

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

Children are keen to enter the setting and are happy and confident with staff, showing that they feel safe and secure. On arrival, they select their name card from the desk and put it in a box, whilst the register is completed by a member of staff. They then hang their coat on a named peg and these routines promote early self-help and literacy skills.

They handle toys carefully with little reminders from staff to be safe. Several children use the large slide safely with obvious enjoyment and also incorporate it into role play as a den, under which they can hide. They use the full area of the playroom, showing the confidence to explore all of the activities offered before settling on favourites. Children enjoy playing with play dough placed adjacent to the home corner and they carefully carry baking trays of dough cakes in and out of the pretend oven. Staff encourage development of counting and talk about kitchen safety to extend learning here.

The room is organised into areas for role play, small world play, mark making and messy play and children play purposefully at all of these areas, showing good levels of concentration. Children paint at an easel, absorbed in their creative experience. Jigsaw puzzles provide development of early problem solving skills and children show persistence when completing them. Staff move between activity areas to interact with children and observe them, so that they use opportunities to extend learning then plan for the next steps they need to take.

Staff record children's progress well and are aware of what children need to do next. As a result of staff being knowledgeable about the children in their key groups, children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The pre-school is well resourced to provide children with opportunities to extend their skills for the future in information and communication technology, as they can play games that extend early numeracy, literacy and control of a mouse. The continuous provision available enhances progress within the six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help children achieve positive outcomes.

Children are offered healthy choices at snack time and a small number can say whether a particular food is healthy or not. They enjoy choosing from a variety of fruits, with crackers and cheese. Some children can pour their own drink of milk or water and water is available for children to pour for themselves at all times in the playroom. Children are confident when asking staff if they can go to the toilet. Having clean hands is promoted for good health and the pre-snack routine involves children putting their name card in the snack box, then using antibacterial wipes

on their hands. There are many opportunities for physical play indoors and outside, so that children learn to enjoy exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Children sit very well during group times and clearly enjoy them, whilst learning everyday knowledge, such as, seasons, days of the week and the alphabet. Children's artwork is prominently displayed in the room to show how their efforts are valued. Staff help children to maintain good behaviour and manners by acting as positive role models and praising children who are behaving well. Children enjoy activities related to a variety of festivals and cultures, such as Eid Mubarak and Diwali, so that they gain knowledge of cultures in the wider community to promote diversity.

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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