

Crag Bank Under Fives

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Jacqueline Baker

Setting address	Crag Bank Village Hall, Jesson Way, Crag Bank, Carnforth, LA5 9EG
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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*.

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

Crag Bank Under Fives opened in 1991 and is run by a committee. The playgroup is located in Crag Bank Village Hall close to the centre of Carnforth and consists of two playrooms, a kitchen and toilet facilities. All children share access to an outdoor play area. The playgroup serves children from Carnforth and the surrounding areas.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time, all of whom may be two years to five years of age. There are currently 52 children on roll. The playgroup receives funding to provide free early education to children aged three and four years old. The playgroup supports children with English as a second language.

The playgroup provides full day care and is open from Mondays to Fridays from 9.30am until 4pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are six members of staff who work with the children, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or 3. The staff have completed the first stage of a local authority quality award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall the children are happy and settled in the playgroup, where they enjoy playing and learning. Staff's vigilance promotes children's safety, and they provide a stimulating environment, where most children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff are skilled at developing strong partnerships with parents, other providers, local schools and outside agencies, and this has a very positive effect on making sure that every child's needs are met. The dedicated staff are supported by a strong committee, and together they are striving to advance outcomes for all children. Self-evaluation is used effectively, and the playgroup is in a good position to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the use of observation and assessment to consistently identify the learning priorities for all children and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for them
- extend the range of resources and opportunities for children to explore natural materials such as sand and water.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safe as staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. Staff know how to protect children from harm and to whom they should report any concerns. Risk assessments and thorough daily checks to the environment mean that children are as safe as possible. The outside area is fully fenced and good security procedures prevent others from entering the premises. The playgroup has an effective recruitment procedure, which includes interviews by both committee and managers, appropriate background checks and a supervised trial period. This, together with appraisals and regular team meetings, mean that staff are and remain suitable for their role.

Managers are committed to providing stimulating and challenging opportunities to all children in their care. They frequently consult with the staff, and together they identify areas for development and areas of strength. Staff attend a variety of training courses, and the managers incorporate one afternoon per week to enable learning to be shared with colleagues and any learning tasks to be completed. This enables the staff to develop their own knowledge and thereby benefit the children in their care. Staff evaluate their provision and continue to be committed to the local authority quality award scheme. These processes allow for everyone to reflect and consider ways in which to provide opportunities to improve outcomes for children.

The playgroup makes the most of diversity to help children understand the society they live in. They plan activities and provide resources to reflect the wider world. Staff have a good knowledge of children's individual needs because parents share knowledge of their children with staff. This forms a good starting point for staff to develop plans to promote children's learning and development.

Resources are good, fit for purpose and support children's learning and development. Staff skilfully organise the environment every day and give consideration to ease of access and the safety of the children. For example, resources such as a slide, bikes and tunnels are situated at one end of the hall and away from activities needing more concentration. Staff are well-deployed and are skilled in engaging with children to enrich their experiences. Partnerships are well established and make a strong contribution to children's achievement and well-being. Regular visits to the local schools, for example, build children's confidence about their next transition and support continuity of care for all. Parents are supportive of the playgroup and are kept well informed about future developments by newsletters from both managers and the committee. Questionnaires and informal discussions with staff mean that any ideas or concerns are quickly dealt with and changes made. Parents value the playgroup being at the heart of their local area and do not hesitate to send their younger children when they reach the appropriate age.

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

Overall, children are happy and settle quickly at the playgroup. Staff actively engage with the children while they play and they promote children's learning by asking questions and offering praise and encouragement. Staff observe children but do not consistently identify, record and plan their next steps. Good use is made of the outside area, where children have free access throughout the day and in all weathers. Children delight in using the garden house. They act out imaginary games with friends, put on dressing up clothes or settle on cushions to read books. Although resources support all areas of development, there is limited opportunity for children to enjoy playing with sand, water and other materials, such as soil. Vigilant staff make sure that children are as safe as possible while they play, and they remind children about safety when using the slide and riding bikes. Staff encourage spontaneous learning by providing bubble wrap and allowing children to stamp up and down, delighting in the sound. A good mix of resources means that children are able to follow their own interests and extend their learning by taking part in adult-led activities. For example, the intercity trains passing the building provide endless interest for some children; this is then extended by the staff, who provide activities based on transport.

Children are safe and develop a sense of belonging to the playgroup. They generally move around safely and give good consideration to others. They are confident to chat to staff and share their news and thoughts; this is especially evident at the meal table, where staff encourage social interaction. This helps to develop children's confidence about speaking in a small group and demonstrates their sense of security. Most children show a good awareness about healthy lifestyles. They enjoy fruit and other healthy snacks, staff extend the experience by discussing different food and displaying pictures of healthy foods. Children know that they should wash hands after using the toilet and before meals. They enjoy regular opportunities to join in with football and dance activities led by outside professionals.

Children show a good understanding of diversity, engaging in a good range of activities and experiences to help support this. Visiting parents introduce children to Indian cooking and allow them to experience Indian hand painting. This, together with supporting displays and resources helps children to respect each other and accept each other's differences. Behaviour is generally good, and children interact positively with each other. They learn to pour their own drinks at snack times and sit happily for circle time showing their growing independence and understanding of expectations of behaviour in the playgroup. Children play well independently, becoming active, curious and inquisitive learners. They are keen to use computers, and supportive staff offer help with them and give plenty of praise for children's efforts. This encourages children to extend their skills and to promote their learning and development. Frequent visits to the local schools mean that children become familiar with school routines and develop a keenness to learn. Story-sacks are lent out weekly to parents, who help to foster an interest in reading and sharing of stories. Children bring books to staff and delight in turning

pages and looking at the pictures. This helps children to build effective skills that they need for their future learning.

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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