

Cathedral Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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

The Cathedral Playgroup was re-registered under a new management committee in 2011. It is situated in the Lancaster Cathedral church hall in the heart of Lancaster. The setting has use of a large hall, kitchen, toilets and storage. The children have access to a recently renovated enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm during term time. It is registered on the Early Years Register and voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Registration is for a total of 32 children in the early years age range, of whom none may be under two. Currently there are 29 children on roll. The children attend various sessions throughout the week. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, including the manager and a deputy. Four members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3. Two other members of staff are unqualified. Advice, support and training are gained from the local authority. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed at the playgroup and children consequently feel safe and secure. Children enjoy coming to playgroup and learning about their local community and the world around them. Children have their needs reasonably well met because the staff get to know them thoroughly and adequately support their individual learning and development. The organisation of resources is good, including staff deployment and all play areas. Satisfactory policies and procedures are shared with parents and carers, ensuring the needs of children are generally met, along with any additional support needs. The playgroup has a positive attitude to improvement as demonstrated by an achievable action plan and a motivated staff team.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase frequency of observations for individual children in order to more effectively record progress towards the early learning goals and to plan focused activities that support individual children's next steps in learning
- develop labelling of the environmental and resources to include pictures with words so as to support all children in their decision making and developing literacy skills, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and new starters

- improve sharing with parents information regarding their children's learning and development in order that parents can more fully support learning at home.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup has a good safeguarding procedure and understands the signs of abuse sufficiently so that staff provide secure and safe care for children. A designated safeguarding officer is well informed and shares up-to-date knowledge with the other staff. An effective recruitment and probationary process further safeguards children at the playgroup. Parents are provided with adequate information on all policies and procedures, including how to complain to Ofsted should they wish to do so. Policies are updated at regular intervals by the senior staff and management committee. Risks assessments of equipment, toys and the premises are routinely carried out in order to provide a good level of safety for children and adults using the environment. Satisfactory records are kept by the playgroup. Resources are well deployed and provide a broad range of purposeful, interesting play and learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate for the children attending.

The staff reflect critically on how well children engage in their activities. Staff are well motivated to improving the standard of care and learning provided and have identified clear and achievable areas for improvement. However, the infrequency of detailed observations of individual children limits staff's ability to assess progress towards early learning goals and plan activities that fully support children's next steps in learning and development. Staff have an overall positive attitude to core training that maintains their skill in paediatric first aid and refreshes their safeguarding knowledge.

The playgroup has warm, trusting relationships with parents that enable staff to discuss concerns with parents and meet children's needs. However, ways to share with parents the detail of their children's progress are not sufficiently developed and limit parents' ability to fully support their children's learning at home. Strong wider partnerships enable effective sharing of information that supports children's welfare, learning and development, particularly during transition to the local primary school.

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

Children are safe at the setting because the staff ensure that the environment is secure and risks are minimised. Children are happy, content and secure at the setting and the overall quality of care is satisfactory. They know how to manage risks when playing in poor weather conditions and when moving between indoor and outdoor environments. This is because staff explain the need for extra care when wet areas are slippery and the high wind causes doors to slam.

The staff have a good level of enthusiasm for childcare and early education. Consequently, children willingly engage and make consistent progress in their learning. Staff play alongside all children to support their learning, particularly when they are new to playgroup or when they do not speak English as their first language. Children access a broad range equipment and resources. However, opportunities to provide more environmental print and labelling to enhance decision making and literacy skills have not been maximised. Children develop the adequate skills they need in order to secure future learning. They receive appropriate levels of challenge within activities and all children are effectively included. For example, as they play instruments together, children are invited to think about playing their tambourines, triangles and shakers softly and then gradually to increase their volume level.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles because the playgroup provides regular opportunities to enjoy active play inside and outdoors. For example, on the outside paved area, children create an obstacle course of colourful crates and raised wooden bars, over which they balance and leap. Parents provide pack lunches for their children that are nutritious, balanced and appropriate to children's dietary needs, with occasional guidance from staff. Children help themselves to water throughout the session and enjoy healthy snacks, such as, milk, banana, apple and breadsticks. Consequently, children learn how eating sensibly promotes their overall good health. Children wash their hands after messy play and before eating and staff remind them about the importance of hygiene routines in preventing infection.

Children generally behave well at the playgroup because the staff model good behaviour, give clear guidance to children about acceptable behaviour and warmly comfort children when they are hurt or distressed. Children learn to respect themselves and others with different cultures. This is because the playgroup effectively welcomes all children and their parents and keenly celebrates their different heritages. For example, children learn about how Easter is celebrated in Poland and decorate traditional Polish Easter bunnies.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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