

St. Vincent's Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Anne Crocker

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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

St Vincent's Pre-School opened in 1987 and is organised by a local committee. It operates from the Parish Centre, which is a detached building within the grounds of St. Vincent's Primary School and church in the Norden area of Rochdale, Lancashire. The group is open every weekday from 8.30am until 12.30pm during term time only. Children access a three-hour session during these hours due to flexible entitlement. Children have access to the school playground for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 28 children aged three to under five years on roll and some attend on a part-time basis. Children attend from a local catchment area. The setting employs seven members of staff, five of whom, including the two managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Adults' meticulous knowledge of children's individual needs results in highly tailored individual planning which ensures children are well supported to make the next steps in their learning. As a consequence children make consistently good progress in relation to their starting points and they relish attending this stimulating pre-school. They are safe and secure and show confidence and self assurance in their learning as they discuss their work with animation and enthusiasm.

Adults display a high level of motivation to move practice forward. Regular self-evaluation by the managers and staff makes sure that priorities for development are accurately identified and acted upon, resulting in a responsive service that meets all users needs.

The partnerships with parents and the local school are a key strength, which means that children experience continuity in their learning and experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- liaise with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage for a child or group of children in order to ensure progression and continuity of learning
- ensure systems for hand washing are safe and effective to support children in developing skills of personal hygiene.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The managers and staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding issues and keep up to date with training. They are extremely confident in their roles and responsibilities to protect children in their care. All staff are vetted with robust systems in place to ensure they are suitable to work with young children. Children are particularly well protected as comprehensive safety policies and procedures are in place and updated regularly. Staff use in-depth risk assessments to ensure all the areas used by children are safe, which means that children are able to move around freely and confidently.

The environment in the pre-school is warm, welcoming and stimulating. Children's well being is enhanced due to the thoughtful and enticing organisation of accessible resources within the main hall space. These resources excite the children and offer lots of choices about what to play with. Staff interact sensitively to extend children's learning, for example discussing models built with construction toys and taking photos of children's work, consequently children's initiative is fostered and they develop independence and confidence to consolidate their learning.

The two managers who work jointly to organise the provision have complementary skills and knowledge and they make an exceptional team. They value their staff and offer regular appraisals and training opportunities. This has resulted in a committed staff team with high morale, who work together to strive to improve the first class service they offer. Effective use of a quality assurance programme to identify strengths and weaknesses supports reflective practice and consequently brings about positive improvements.

Staff are particularly skilled at ensuring that a fully-inclusive environment makes children and parents feel very secure and welcomed. Parents attest to strong relationships with their child's key-person, which facilitates a regular two-way flow of useful information. Parents and staff share information about children's starting points and their progress. Staff give parents ideas of how they can support their child's learning at home. This means that each child is well supported. In addition adults use a tracking system to reflect on children's progress over time. As a consequence, children who need extra support are identified early and the pre-school actively liaises with external agencies when they feel that children require further support. This promotes the well being and learning of all children who attend.

The partnership with the adjacent school is exceptional with many examples of joined up working. Staff from the school visit the pre-school regularly, for example to become involved in special events, such as the Christmas production. During children's transition period to the school the pre-school staff attend the initial parents evening, along with the parents and children. This enables them to share in-depth information about the children and ensure continuity in learning.

Some children attend other early years settings in addition to the pre-school and links with these settings have yet to be developed. Consequently information about these children is not shared. Additionally some children transfer to other local schools and transition arrangements are not yet securely in place.

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

Children display a strong sense of security within the pre-school. They show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and have actively contributed to the behaviour rules of the setting. Children remind each other of these rules whilst playing, this helps them to keep themselves safe.

Children approach adults for help and support when needed and are also considerate to each other, for example when a child fell from the climbing frame and hurt his knee, his friend escorted him to an adult who comforted him sensitively. Children listen attentively and respond quickly and positively to instructions from adults, walking quietly to the carpet area when a bell is rung for group time. Children learn to assess risk for themselves, talking about how they need to behave on the daily walk to the school playground.

Children display extremely high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They chat confidently to adults and work very well with their peers in activities, such as role-playing a bus journey. They work extremely well independently and can focus on self-chosen activities, such as collage work, for extended periods of time. During the inspection the dress rehearsal for the Christmas production was performed with pride, all children were involved and enthusiastically put on their wonderful costumes, confidently participating in the actions and singing songs.

A systematic way of recording observations is in place, these are then used to inform planning to meet children's individual needs and interests. As a result children make exceedingly good progress.

The environment is rich in print and numbers and written words are used around the room. Children use these purposefully in their learning, for example a child points to numbers on a poster, counting along a one hundred number square grid, she reminds herself what number seven looks like and uses this information to help her order Christmas stockings from one to ten. Children's language development is well supported by the staff through positive interaction, for example a child approaches an adult to discuss their work, sharing her thinking as she describes her construction model with rich language, saying 'It's a flying dragon spaceship house!' Children are able to rest in the quiet book area, where there are cushions and drapes. Group time is planned for each day and consequently children are familiar with a wide range of stories, letters and sounds activities and rhymes. The selection of books on offer introduces new ideas and promotes diversity, as do the wealth of positive images around the setting.

Children successfully learn about the local community through outings, which

include posting invitations to the Christmas production in the local post box. Children learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others and have an appreciation of the needs of others, for example they recently participated in activities to support a national charity.

Children freely explore a range of accessible creative materials, using scissors and glue with familiarity and control, this allows them to give their imaginations free reign. Children's creative work is valued through displays on portable display boards, they proudly point out their pictures. Children develop technology skills through using portable laptops and helping adults to download photographs onto a computer to make a slideshow.

Through everyday routines children are developing a good understanding of making healthy choices. Children are offered a choice of nutritious snacks and help themselves to fresh water. Children have a good understanding of the importance of effective personal hygiene practices, through participation in activities, such as trips to the dentist. Hand washing systems are in place but are not always managed effectively as the children all use one water bath and towel to clean their hands.

Although there is no direct access to outdoor space children walk to the adjacent school playground on a daily basis. They have access to climbing equipment, bikes, bats and balls, which develops their spatial awareness and control. In addition through painting, drawing and malleable activities children are developing their dexterity and co-ordination skills.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	2
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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