

St Vincents Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

St.Vincent's Pre-School Playgroup and Out of School Club is run by a voluntary committee made up of school, parish and parent representatives. It opened in 1996 and operates from two rooms within a static unit in the grounds of St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School in Knutsford. A maximum of 35 children may attend the pre-school and the out of school club at any one time.

The pre-school is open each weekday between 9am and 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3pm term time only. The out of school club is open from 8am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm term time only. There is also a lunch club open to pre-school children which operates from 11.30am to 12.30pm every weekday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 66 children on roll in the pre-school. The out of school club has 48 children on roll, five of whom are in the early years age range. Children come from a wide catchment area and do not necessarily attend St Vincent's school. The groups support children who speak English as an additional language.

St.Vincent's Pre-School and Out of School Club employs 11 members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from teachers within the school and local authority early years consultants.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

St.Vincent's Pre-School Playgroup offers children an exciting and highly stimulating environment in which they thrive. Children are secure, confident, happy and make excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff value parents highly and work closely with them and other professionals to ensure that children's individual needs are met. The well established staff team share the manager's enthusiasm and commitment to continually improving the high quality early years provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase print within environment, such as letters, labels and symbols, further promoting opportunities for children to link sounds and letters and develop writing skills
- continue to develop staff skills in taking opportunities to ask children questions to challenge their learning further, particularly in areas of numeracy.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective policies, procedures and records support the high priority placed upon safeguarding children. The robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to be working with children and hold appropriate qualifications. Staff have a good understanding of the setting's comprehensive child protection policy. They are aware of their duties to report any concerns to their manager or to relevant agencies as appropriate. Thorough risk assessments are carried out. These ensure children's safety, allowing them to explore a wide range of interesting and challenging activities without stopping reasonable risk taking.

Children benefit greatly from the highly stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments that inspire their creativity and imagination. The carefully considered daily routine optimises their opportunities to explore the superb range of toys, resources and activities independently and with adult support. Staff continually reflect on how well the environment meets the needs of children they are caring for; taking account of their age, abilities, interests and learning styles.

The manager provides excellent leadership. She is passionate about early years and is involved in a number of early years organisations. She positively promotes the constant process of self-evaluation and professional development amongst the whole staff team. They attend regular training and share best practice through visits from, and to, other early years settings. Plans for the future are well targeted and identify areas for development that will have a positive impact on children and their families.

Strong links have been established with other early years settings and professionals. These are highly effective in supporting children's transition to school, ensuring children's individual needs are met and maintaining consistency. The pre-school has introduced many different ways to promote meaningful partnerships with parents. Their views and support are sought and they are kept well informed of the various developments and activities within the pre-school. Parents come to talk to children about their cultural celebrations and have helped with projects, such as building the sand pit in the outdoor area. They are supported in extending children's learning at home through the use of book bags, sharing learning journeys and 'I can' books and information in newsletters.

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

Clear and purposeful systems for observation and assessment clearly track children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are fully included in this process from the time children start settling, to their transition to school. Staff and parents' knowledge of children is used to ensure that planning and interaction

is based on children's interests, skills and abilities. Staff are skilled at interacting with children during planned and spontaneous activities. They support and extend children's learning, at times challenging them to enable them to make excellent progress in their learning.

Children make many decisions throughout the play sessions and are extremely independent. They enthusiastically choose activities and become totally engrossed in their play and learning. They access a healthy snack and drink that is available throughout the sessions. Free access to the exciting outdoor learning environment benefits children in many ways and values active learning styles. Children develop healthy lifestyles as they have lots of fresh air and exercise. They plant, grow and eat fruit and vegetables and develop excellent large muscle and coordination skills as they climb and swing on tyres, run, climb and crawl.

Children develop many skills to keep themselves safe. They learn how to use equipment safely, such as the woodwork tools and state that hot food can burn. A strong emphasis is put upon empowering children to talk about their emotions and develop a sense of their own and other's rights. Children co-operate with each other and build good relationships. A child approaches a group of children who are creating models with large wooden bricks saying 'hi, do you need any help'? They plan to make a cross and then identify they have made a circle and a 'c for cat'. When baking a child recognises words from the packet of one of the ingredients. This demonstrates their understanding of shape, letters and sounds. Children have many opportunities to make marks using a wide range of media and some print is on display around the play areas. Children develop a love of books. They become absorbed in a story read by staff who skilfully use props to bring the story to life and maintain children's concentration. Afterwards children look at the book with friends, playing with the props, acting out the story and developing their early literacy skills. Staff encourage children to count as they use hand puppets when listening to number rhymes using headphones and when playing skittles with cardboard cylinders. Plans show how staff intend to challenge more able children further by sorting and calculating.

Children are highly creative and imaginative in their play, developing excellent design and mark making skills. They use a range of natural and conventional materials to construct an elaborate castle. Children make collages, joining materials together using different resources, such as sticky tape and glue sticks. They enjoy playing instruments, listening to and following staffs' instructions as they play them loudly, quietly, quickly or slowly.

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

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	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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met