

Lancaster University Pre-School Centre

Lancaster University, Bailrigg, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YW

Inspection date	29/07/2013
Previous inspection date	02/02/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children are effectively safeguarded and well protected. This is because staff fully understand their role and responsibility in safeguarding children. Children are protected by rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures, which includes the induction and supervision of new staff.
- An extremely motivated staff team are supported by an enthusiastic leadership team, who provide high quality supervision and a programme of professional development, which continually enhances the already excellent practice.
- Children flourish in this setting due to the exemplary care they receive. All aspects of their welfare and development are promoted to a high standard, therefore, children make excellent progress in their development.
- Children's learning is enhanced by the excellent use and deployment of high quality resources and a stimulating environment. In addition, highly knowledgeable staff ably support children's learning.
- Children are very happy, secure and settled because the staff create a relaxing environment. Children have extremely positive relationships with their key person and all the staff, which supports their emotional well-being.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and children throughout the inspection. The inspector also spoke with parents.
- The inspector looked at documentation. These included children's records, policies and staff records.
- The inspector looked around the setting, including outside.
- The inspector carried out observations of the children's interactions with staff during activities. The inspector also carried out a joint observation in the creche room with the deputy manager.

Inspector

Sandra Harwood

Full Report

Information about the setting

Lancaster University Pre-School Centre was registered in 1992 on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose built premises on the university campus in Lancaster and is managed by Lancaster University. The nursery serves the university staff, students and the local community. It operates from eight playrooms and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 37 members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications level 3 through to level 6. The manager and a number of staff hold Early Years Professional Status.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year, from 8.15am until 5.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 184 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- continue to be proactive when having contact with other providers where children attend, to ensure continuity of care and learning.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

A warm bright and welcoming entrance greets children and families. Children's photographs can be seen in a range of landmarks around the world with Mount Everest proudly in the centre with children climbing up. Children enjoy looking for themselves or friends and proudly show their family. This support for children and families can be seen in every room as family boards display children and the people, who are important to them. This raises children's self-confidence, self-awareness and acknowledging their families.

Staff draw on their excellent knowledge and understanding of young children's developmental stages and the way they learn. Careful and accurate observations help staff identify children's needs and interests and incorporate them into planning. Children's individual needs are known and successfully met because comprehensive information is gathered by the key person. Staff use this to plan activities to help settle children as they enter the nursery for the first few weeks. This highly successful exchange of information

and variety of communication links results in a highly effective commitment to working in partnership and parental involvement in their child's learning.

Children are well motivated, very eager to join in and they show great curiosity and the desire to explore and are inquisitive learners. Messy play, such as, dried cereal, or corn flour and water mix enables younger children to learn using their senses of touch, smell and taste. A dedicated sensory room supports this further as all children access for relaxation or stories.

Outdoor play provides excellent opportunities for children to test and extend their physical skills and offers meaningful, planned, purposeful play and exploration. For example, the forest school provides opportunities for children to make dens, hunt for bugs and cook bread or toast marshmallows on the fire pit under the close supervision of staff. The extensive garden areas offers a wealth of resources for children to be active learners. Here, they learn to take safe risks, as they negotiate the boulders or tunnels or enjoy the experience of watching the builders and show their knowledge as they talk about using the long ruler. Indoors, very young children have a safe environment to move, roll and stretch, while the more mobile learn to stand, crawl and walk. Staff ensure their safety as they support children as they practise these skills using the indoor steps and slide. Staff enable the very young children to develop their throwing skills as they demonstrate an interest in the balls from the ball pool. They support the children as they continually pass a ball to enable children to follow their learning and practise their throwing skills. Children show excitement as they succeed and receive lots of animated praise and rolling commentary from staff.

Children are extremely confident communicators and readily ask questions of staff and visitors. For example, pre-school children ask about the identification tag around the visitor's neck. They question her until they are happy with the answers. Then go on to demonstrate their understanding that print carries meaning as they write their name then ask the visitor to write hers comparing it with the name on the identification tag, 'it's the same'. They inform the visitor that to come to the forest school with them, a pass is required. Children find the required pass, this demonstrates their understanding of information they have been given.

Staff are highly skilled in the way in which they use adult-led and child-initiated activities to question and challenge children's thinking. Consequently, children are thoroughly engrossed in their play and demonstrate high levels of concentration. Innovative and inspiring experiences are offered to children across the age ranges. For example, great excitement spreads as the pre-school children experiment making volcanoes and staff ask questions that develop children's thinking. 'Which one will go the highest?' They shout with enthusiasm when they guess the correct one. Children are so enthralled by this that they inform staff that they are going to do this at home. Younger children gain great pleasure from listening to the rain as it falls on their wet suits and into the buckets; the staff use these opportunities to extend children's mathematical skills as well as their emotional well being. Children use different size buckets to catch the water as it pours from the gutters. Staff capitalise on every opportunity to develop children's communication and language skills. They use descriptive language as they talk about the noise, made by the rain and splashing as they explore and jump in the puddles together.

All children are valued and actively and enthusiastically involved in their learning. The role play across the rooms offers children lots of opportunities to consolidate their learning and create their links with home. For example, children make soup and stew with real vegetables; they peel the onion and talk about how it stings their eyes. They decide to use the empty soap powder tub for recycling as this has recently been introduced at home.

Children of all ages make marks with a range of materials both inside and outside. Older children write and fill envelopes, the very young children enjoy dough, corn flour and water mix or chinks and pencils readily available to choose from as they develop their early writing skills. Children's creativity is actively enhanced through continual access to paint, modelling and use of the range of small world and construction resources, which they mix and match to develop their play.

Children, who speak English as an additional language participate fully in the day as plans to help them to develop their language and communication skills are executed. For example, staff work extremely closely with parents to learn and use key words in their home language and words from different home languages are displayed around each room. Staff embrace new knowledge about customs of different countries to help to support children. A range of activities and experiences create an excellent understanding of different cultures and the involvement of fund raising for charities help children to understand difference as staff discuss the reasons.

Assessment through highly accurate observation is rigorous and the information gained is used very effectively to guide planning. Tracking documents, individual planning and the progress check at age two are used with great effect to identify early if children have any special educational needs and/or disabilities. All the information is regularly shared with parents, who input their knowledge to guide next steps. Staff regularly check children's attainments against national guidance documents to identify areas of concern or improvement and ensure activities are planned to enhance learning. Subsequently, they adapt their planning to incorporate further activities to support those children and the areas of learning identified. As a result, children's individual needs are consistently met through early involvement of relevant external professionals and agencies.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

All children show an extremely strong sense of security and safety within the nursery as they have very strong relationships with their key persons. These, along with the significant attachments to all staff, means that children's emotional and physical needs are exceptionally well met and their well-being is given the highest priority. Children are confident, settle well and develop excellent relationships at every level with adults and each other. Across the age range, children work exceptionally well independently and with their friends, showing excellent negotiation and cooperation skills. For example, children show great imagination skills as they use the large basket as a boat with spades for oars. They welcome staff and other children, informing them they need the map to find their way. Spontaneously, they begin to sing 'row your boat'.

All children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. Pre-school children inform visitors how to wash their hands because they are sticky. Younger children independently access the toilet and follow hand washing routines expertly. Very young children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met exceptionally well. Staff changing nappies follow strict routines, show respect and take time to interact with the children. Staff actively encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles. They promote healthy eating through nutritious cooked meals, or offer advice to parents around lunch boxes. Regular opportunities to access exercise both indoors and outside motivates and develops children's understanding of the importance of exercise.

Exemplary practices are adopted to prevent the spread of infection. For example, anti-bacterial gel is used on entry to the premises and all rooms. Information is shared with parents with regards to the exclusion times for illness and the procedures to ensure sick children are cared for according to the policy. Visual reminders and well-recorded information about children's dietary requirements or allergies ensure they are clearly identified and met. Each room has a dedicated 'snuggle down' area to enable children to follow their own needs for rest or sleep. This supports children's well-being and health.

Top priority is given to children's safety through the excellent supervision by staff. Children demonstrate and follow the rules, which they have implemented in the rooms or when in the forest school. Regular fire evacuation practise and visits from outside agencies, such as the police, enhance children's understanding about keeping themselves and others safe. Excellent provision of high quality resources, a stimulating learning environment and very good deployment and continuous exchange of information between staff ensures that children learn, develop and thrive exceptionally well in safety. The accurate, consistent and continuous risk assessments further support the children.

Children's behaviour is exemplary as the staff are very good role models. Staff are supportive and respectful to each other and the children. The nursery has a calm, inviting atmosphere where all children and their families are respected. Staff speak quietly, use good manners and always use correct language. Older children independently say 'please and thank you' with guidance and encouragement given to the younger children.

Children learn about the transition to school through discussions, seeking information from individual school websites, activities and visits to the setting from teachers. The excellent transition document is completed prior to children's move to school, so that reception class teachers are fully informed of children's stage of development. Transitions within the nursery are exemplary. Time is taken to visit, meet new staff and children, explore new environments and join in sessions. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning or move to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management team are proactive and innovative in responding to changes and continuously seek high quality practice. They have a comprehensive understanding of the learning and development requirements. Consequently, extremely successful educational programmes and monitoring systems ensure stimulating and challenging experiences for children. The management team provide effective individualised supervision. All staff are actively encouraged and readily take advantage of the excellent training on offer. They use this to develop further their already first-rate understanding, skills and qualifications. Consequently, these skills are used to enhance confidence and practice within the nursery.

Safeguarding arrangements are well embedded in all aspects of practice. Any concerns are given the utmost priority and dealt with effectively in relation to child protection issues. All staff have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues and how to implement the safeguarding policy and procedures. There are robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children with ongoing suitability checks further promoting children's safeguarding. Children's welfare is given top priority as all policies and procedures are in place and used as working documents within each room. These are also shared with parents and carers to ensure everyone involved is consistently informed.

The deputy managers work alongside staff in the rooms and they check and monitor practice. Peer on peer observations, which includes deputy managers' practice, creates a positive culture of mutual respect. This results in a highly effective dedicated team.

Rigorous and extensive monitoring analysis and self-challenge enables the nursery to devise exceptionally well-targeted plans. Actions identified are implemented with precision and managed thoroughly. Staff, children and parents are involved in the process and their views are actively listened to and their ideas and suggestions are implemented. Management and staff constantly evaluate and reflect on their practice. Children, parents and staff feel they have a voice within the setting and are able to effect change. Management and staff are proactive in responding to the views of parents, such as parents' evening being introduced. Parents receive a wealth of information regarding the service through newsletters, regular updates and meeting about their children's development. A notice and information board extends information for parents. Parental involvement is also encouraged through the parent focus group, which meets regularly to discuss and/or raise issues about future development.

Highly complimentary parent feedback during the inspection highlights they are delighted with the service, which they receive and are incredibly happy with how well their children are progressing. They state that staff are 'warm and welcoming', 'take time to talk to them about what children have been doing' and they know that their children are happy, well cared for and safe.

Partnership working at all levels is exemplary and a fully inclusive environment is provided. Well-established partnerships with other professionals advise and support staff to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	309552
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	915190
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	158
Number of children on roll	184
Name of provider	Lancaster University
Date of previous inspection	02/02/2010
Telephone number	01524 594 464

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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