

Inspection of Cathedral Playgroup

Catholic Social Centre, Balmoral Road, LANCASTER LA1 3BU

Inspection date: 22 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Strong leadership ensures that staff are trained, knowledgeable and skilled in caring for children and helping them make good progress. Staff know how to safeguard children and promote children's good health. Leaders and staff take time to develop relationships and work closely with parents and any other professionals that may be involved with a child. This enables them to really understand about the children in their care, their families and what life is like for them at home. Any additional funding is spent carefully to ensure that it helps meet the needs of the children and supports their progress. Children have real opportunities to learn about their community and the similarities and differences in each other. They learn that the range of countries they originate from have different languages, currency, flags, food and traditions.

Staff are skilled at helping children to settle in and to quickly learn the routines and expectations of their behaviour. Children receive lots of positive praise, and they behave well. They learn how to share, take turns and form friendships. All staff are purposefully deployed, so they can spend most of their time interacting with children and teaching them through play, planned activities and daily routine tasks. This helps staff to get to know what children enjoy, know and can do and what they need to learn next. They use this knowledge and their effective teaching skills to deliver a challenging curriculum that prepares children well for school. Children are inquisitive and excited to have a go and learn new things.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders actively encourage staff to look after their mental health and well-being. They are provided with resources and strategies to help them manage stress and anxiety and build an open and caring culture. Staff work together extremely well as a team to keep children safe and help them learn.
- The manager, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), is highly skilled and experienced at supporting children who are disadvantaged and those who need more specialist support and intervention. Highly effective working relationships are established with a range of professionals and services, which secures joined-up working. This means that staff understand how to keep children safe and help them settle, learn and develop at nursery. Professionals report how well the pre-school helps children with a range of needs to make progress and be ready for the next stage in their education.
- Throughout the day, staff motivate children to practise and develop their language skills. Staff engage children in interesting discussions and conversations. When interacting with children, they ask questions, encourage children to recall past learning and model extensions to children's vocabulary. Staff allow children time to think and respond, and children listen carefully and

follow instruction. Children are confident speakers with well-developed vocabularies.

- Staff purposefully provide lots of opportunities for children to develop the small muscles in their hands. Children show great concentration as they measure out and stir ingredients to make play dough. They persevere as the mixture gets harder and harder to stir. Children learn to use a syringe when experimenting how to melt ice and are skilled at using small tools in the workshop. As they get stronger and more practised, children can skilfully control scissors and write with pencils, in readiness for school.
- Staff teach children mathematics at every suitable opportunity. Staff model mathematical language as they encourage children to compare size and shape, sort objects in order of size and talk about positioning. Children show they are confident and able in mathematics and are learning to count, recognise numbers and make simple calculations.
- Staff provide experiences for children that they may not get at home. For example, children without a garden have lots of opportunities for fresh air and physical activity. Children learn about the community they live in and how to keep themselves safe through walks to the local canal, museums, places of worship, the library and shops. They learn how to behave responsibly and about the important jobs people do in their community that they can aspire to.
- Parents are provided with a welcoming space to meet other parents, view the pre-school's policies and guidance and talk to staff about their child. This has enabled parents to develop strong relationships with staff and others from the community and to feel less isolated. It has also helped them to understand how their child is progressing and how to support their learning at home. However, leaders and staff need to do more to help some parents understand the importance of their children routinely attending pre-school to maximise children's opportunities to learn and make progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support parents to understand the importance of their child routinely accessing their early education entitlement and improve their attendance at pre-school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY422400
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10308334
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Cathedral Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP530399
Telephone number	07760139531
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Cathedral Playgroup registered in 2011 and is run by a voluntary committee. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of whom, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, during term-time only. Sessions are from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 8.30am to 1pm on Fridays. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachael Flesher

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and the quality of interactions between staff and children and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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