

Castle Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	218111
Inspection date	21/07/2010
Inspector	Janet Keeling

Setting address	Castle Primary School, Mow Cop Road, Mow Cop, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST7 4NE
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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

Castle Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1996. It operates from Castle County Primary School in the rural village of Mow Cop, Staffordshire. The group have access to a classroom and toilet facilities. There is also access to a secure area for outdoor play. The group serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 22 children in the early years age group may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 12 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting receives funding for early years education.

The group opens from 8.50am to 11.50am and from 12.15pm to 3.15pm Monday to Friday. The group is open during school term times only. The group have procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

There are three members of staff who work directly with the children, of whom, two hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and clearly enjoy their time at the setting. Staff are motivated, work well as a team and strive to offer an inclusive and welcoming service where all children are valued as individuals. Children make good progress in their learning and development as they engage in a range of enjoyable activities which take account of their interests and learning needs. Effective partnerships with parents and teachers at the host school have been established ensuring children's needs are fully supported. The pre-school is led and managed by a very enthusiastic and experienced manager who demonstrates a positive attitude and commitment towards effective continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities and challenges for children to be more independent, for example, at snack time
- review all policies and procedures to ensure they are written in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded. All staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and know who to contact should they be concerned about a child in their care. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable people. Staff are competent, demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have a good understanding of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the indoor and outdoor learning environment and outings. Effective evacuation procedures are in place and staff ensure that regular fire drills are completed. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors and have a visitor's book in place. All required documentation is in place and available for inspection, however, the setting's policies and procedures have not been updated in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The environment is welcoming and supports children to make choices about their own learning and play. Staff are successfully deployed to support the children's learning and development.

Staff are motivated, passionate about their work, committed to improving outcomes for children and demonstrate a positive attitude towards continuous improvement. The setting's self-evaluation system, together with parent questionnaires, help staff to identify the group's strengths and areas for improvement. A positive equality and diversity policy outlines a commitment to promoting inclusive practice within the group and all children are welcome regardless of their background. Staff are committed towards continuing their own professional development and regularly attend relevant training courses to improve their knowledge and skills. For example, all staff have completed their paediatric first aid and safeguarding children training. Consequently, children's care and well-being are fully supported.

Parents are warmly welcomed and clearly feel comfortable within the group. Children benefit from the warm and relaxed relationships that have been established between their parents and the staff. The daily exchange of information ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met. Parents speak very highly of the setting's approach to meeting their child's individual needs and say their children are very happy, settled and enjoy the range of activities that are provided. A parent's notice board ensures that parents and carers have access to information about the running of the group. For example, their registration certificate, public liability insurance and all policies and procedures are displayed. The manager and staff work successfully in partnership with the host school and have developed positive links with the reception class teacher. Consequently, this has a positive impact on the children's future needs as many of the children move on to attend the school where they will see familiar adults and be familiar with their new learning environment.

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

Children benefit from a warm and welcoming environment and from the staff's understanding of how to develop learning through play. Children are familiar with the learning environment, settle quickly on arrival and are eager to learn. They have many opportunities to make choices about their own play and learning as they freely access a range of activities and resources. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners. Children interact very positively with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with their friends and staff. However, there are missed opportunities to encourage children to become more independent, for example, during snack time. All children are valued and treated with equal concern with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. On admission to the setting information is gathered from parents and used to support children's individual needs. All children have a 'learning journey folder' which contains information about a child's learning and progress. These folders are shared regularly with parents to ensure parents are fully involved in their child's learning. Staff observe the children as they play and record information which relates to the early learning goals. Information gained through observation is evaluated and used to inform future planning. Children's learning folders also contain photographic evidence of children engaged in a wide range of activities together with evidence of children's own work.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children enjoy their time at the group and engage in a wide range of activities. For example, there was great excitement as a small group of children played at the water play table, they filled containers with water and poured it through funnels, chuckling with delight as it splashed in the water tray. Children begin to recognise that print carries meaning as they identify their own names and self-register at the start of each session. At story time children listen with enjoyment to their favourite stories, such as, 'We're going on a bear hunt', and also sing nursery rhymes with enthusiasm. Children's creativity is supported through a range of accessible role play equipment, construction toys and access to a range of media, such as, chalks, paint, water and sand. Children have access to a computer and programmable toys. They enjoy music and movement sessions and engage in physical activities every day. Children also benefit hugely from planned outings and visits to places, such as, 'Biddulph Grange' where the children feed the ducks and explore a cave, whilst visiting 'Wheelock Hall Farm' children are able to feed a range of animals and at 'Mow Cop Castle' they play on the fixed play equipment and enjoy a picnic.

Children are secure and develop a sense of belonging at the setting. They are happy and settled, displaying confidence and self-esteem. Children behave well, responding positively to the boundaries set, such as, helping to tidy up. Gentle reminders from staff help children develop a sense of right and wrong, they are encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world through access to resources that are representative of diversity and by celebrating cultural festivals throughout the

year. For example, as children celebrated Chinese New Year they enjoyed looking at picture books, dressing up, tasting Chinese food and making a colourful dragon. Children demonstrate a growing awareness of their own health and hygiene needs. They are fully aware of the importance of washing their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. They routinely use the liquid soap and dry their hands under the drying machine. Children are encouraged to bring a healthy snack to pre-school each day and also enjoy hot buttered toast and fresh fruit at snack time. A jug of water and cups are accessible to the children during the session, which enables children to access drinking water at any time. Staff encourage children to keep themselves safe as they discuss the appropriate use of equipment, engage in regular emergency evacuation procedures and learn about road safety whilst out walking. Children demonstrate that they are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them for their transition from the pre-school into school.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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

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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