

Phoenix Centre Specialist Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 253925
Inspection date 09/11/2011
Inspector Elaine Poulton

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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

The Phoenix Centre Specialist Pre-school opened in 1972 and was registered with Ofsted in 2001. The setting changed management and renamed Specialist Pre-school in 2007. The pre-school has sole use of a self-sufficient mobile unit in Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area.

A maximum of ten children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 26 children on roll who are within the early years age range. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. Opening times are Monday to Friday from 9am until 11.30am and 1pm until 3pm during school term times only. This pre-school has registered charitable status and is specifically for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting employs five members of staff to work directly with the children and the manager is employed by Dudley Local Authority Specialist Early Years Service. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds a degree in BSC (Hons) Psychology and holds Early Years Professional Status and the deputy holds a degree in BA (Hons) Special Needs and Inclusion Studies and holds Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children in this specialist setting are extremely well supported by a highly skilled staff team. Consequently, they make significant individual gains in their learning and development. Staff plan a purposeful and developmentally appropriate range of play activities for children in the pre-school. This inclusive environment helps children feel safe, secure and valued. Very good relationships exist between parents and staff with a strong emphasis being placed on identifying and meeting children's individual and specific needs. Excellent partnerships are fostered with others involved in the assessment process, ensuring all children achieve as much as they possibly can. A strong self-evaluation system enables the pre-school to maintain and continually improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further opportunities for parents to access records so that they can contribute effectively to the observation and assessment process to support their child's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Procedures for safeguarding children in this setting are good. There are robust staff vetting, induction and continued suitability procedures in place. Staff are vigilant with visitors and security in and around the pre-school. They have up-to-date training in safeguarding, paediatric first aid and food handling and hygiene to support their practice. Children are helped to recognise and respond to 'no entry' and 'stop' signs on posters and picture prompts. This helps to develop their awareness of keeping themselves safe. There are a wide range of clearly written policies, procedures and parental permissions to ensure children's specific needs are met. There is a comprehensive risk assessment in place which includes additional daily checks to be undertaken. These measures are effective in promoting each and every child's good health, safety and welfare in the pre-school.

The high staff ratio and excellent support provided to each child ensures that their individual stages of development are carefully monitored. Children respond very well to staff as they feel safe and welcome. A wide range of equipment is available to reflect a range of ethnic groups, cultural differences and disabilities. For example, the setting celebrates differences and uses images of the children attending the setting in displays around the learning environment. Activities and resources are provided at different levels for the children to access according to their individual need. For example, floor, tables, standing frames or specialist chairs. Staff are skilled at using Makaton along with spoken words to communicate with children. As most children have little or no speech staff also use a superb range of laminated pictures, logos and photographs as visual prompts and clues. The highly effective use of these resources help children to make choices and express preferences about their personal needs and wishes.

Staff dedicate time to get to know children and their families and careers, fostering strong relationships, thus helping to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. Good quality information is shared with parents through a number of effective ways. For example, daily diaries, information boards, newsletters, phone calls and individual learning journeys. Staff encourage parents to become involved in the life of the pre-school. For example, through well attended celebration days and Makaton taster sessions, which parents, carers and family members found enjoyable and informative. As children travel to the setting on a mini-bus with an escort this reduces the opportunity for parents to accompany their children to the setting and be fully involved with their on-going assessments. However, some staff travel to the child's home once a week to ensure learning journeys are shared with parents. Staff acknowledge that working in partnership impacts positively on children's all round development.

Staff establish very strong links with other professionals involved in the delivery of the early years framework. Partnerships with others who are involved in the assessment process are extremely effective. Staff are dedicated to working

with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff have highly effective relationships with the children's assessment unit, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, speech therapy, hearing and visual impairment teams, local authority special needs coordinator and teaching staff within local schools. The setting is currently developing individual 'Communication Passports' to support children moving from one setting to another. These exemplary partnerships ensure continuity of care and learning for all children during transition times.

The pre-school has embedded a culture of reflective practice and self-evaluation that has established a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement. For example, the pre-school is currently finely tuning the 'Celebrate Every Step' assessment tool. They have taken part in 'Every Child a Talker' project. This helps practitioners to focus on early communication opportunities for children and to share good practice with other settings. Two members of staff have completed 'Communicating Matters' and the whole team has received 'Play Talk' training from a speech and language therapist. The one recommendation raised at the pre-school's last inspection has been fully addressed and has resulted in improved outcomes for children. This dedicated approach and professional attitude to ongoing evaluation assists the pre-school to effectively look at ways to improve the quality of the service provided.

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

All children are fully included and are achieve well, taking into account their starting points when they first attend. Children's development is constantly encouraged through thoughtfully planned play activities that are chosen to meet children's differing abilities and play preferences. Children's achievements are recorded in a number of effective ways. Staff sensitively make detailed formal and informal observations to inform plans and next steps in learning and development. Children's individual progress is well documented in the specialist early years profile. The assessment process is used effectively to plan activities that are tailored to the needs and abilities of individual children in the pre-school. These measures ensure that the outcomes for children are good.

Staff use a wide range of visual clues effectively to help children understand routines and instructions which also help children to express their needs and wishes. Planned transitions between activities include a visual prompt, verbal songs or actual prompt. Practitioners support children on a one to one basis in the guided learning room where they develop their concentration skills. The sensory room is used effectively with some children according to their preferences and needs. Staff bring all the children together at welcome time to acknowledge their peers if they can. Purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities are introduced during daily routines. For example, staff use circle time well to introduce number songs and rhymes to the children. They are encouraged to sit in a small group at story time to look at pictures and to carefully turn book pages

over. Story bags with props such as puppets are introduced effectively and children are encouraged to take an active part in holding or signing the name of the puppet. They begin to recognise and respond with gestures and movements to pictures of their favourite television and cartoon characters and the accompanying recorded signature tune when it is played to them. These planned activities positively promote children's communication and language skills.

The learning environment is well equipped with props, aids and visual clues to help the children to understand what happens next and to feel safe. For example, timelines contain pictures, cards and symbols that represent a number of different planned activities that will happen during the session, such as snack-time, story-time and home-time. Staff make very good use of sign language to introduce activities to help children make choices and decisions about their play. Staff role model good play skills such as turn taking, sharing, playing together and encourage children to join in. Props and prompts such as wait cards, timers, signing and pictures are used effectively to support this. Children feel secure with a familiar routine and so begin to anticipate what happens next. For example, when prompted by the 'time to tidy away' song children happily collect toys and help to put resources into storage boxes. Children are included in some activities at the local primary school and children from the school visit the centre once a week and involve themselves in play activities if appropriate to individual needs. Children also visit the local shops and are able to choose their own piece of fruit for snack time. This has a positive impact on developing skills for the future.

Children are well supported to adopt healthy lifestyles. The child's key person liaises with parents to find the most appropriate way to help with eating, drinking and personal hygiene procedures. Children with communication difficulties are encouraged to picture exchange, sign or point at what they would like to eat and drink at snack time. Children are well supported during nappy changes and during toileting. Drinking water is always available for children during the session. Staff encourage children to help themselves if they are able to and to sit at the table. They are given support to pour their own drink and cut their own fruit. This helps build their independence skills. Most children are very happy to join in with active movement sessions indoors. For example, they smile and have fun holding hands or moving or swaying to the 'funky monkey' song. More mobile children show that they feel safe by confidently moving from the indoor activity room to the outdoor play area freely. All children have access to outdoor play and can take part in climbing, running, riding on wheeled toys or enjoying the fresh air. They are able to rest or sleep and be as active as is appropriate to their individual needs. These measures contribute effectively towards children's good health and well-being.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	1
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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