

Kittens Pre-School

Veronica Street, Off Blackburn Road, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 0AA

Inspection date	21/01/2014
Previous inspection date	07/03/2012

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

- The excellent organisation of the playrooms and outdoor play area provide children with a wealth of fun learning experiences. This lively environment actively encourages the children to confidently follow their own interests, explore how things work and develop very strong self-help skills.
- Well-planned adult-led activities ensure that children make rapid progress in their learning. Teaching is rooted in a very good knowledge of how children learn. During small group activities staff skilfully adapt activities to suit the differing stages and capabilities of each child in the group. This promotes their self-esteem and develops their joy of sharing activities with their peers.
- The enthusiastic and warmth of welcome from staff effectively underpins the children's sense of belonging and security. The ongoing engagement of parents means staff are familiar with children's specific needs and interests. The strong bonds formed enable the children to be happy and confident to play and learn throughout their day.
- The leadership and management team are always looking for ways to improve the pre-school and successfully plan for its further development. The team spirit is very good and the staff work harmoniously together. The pre-school is effectively organised and policies and procedures consistently implemented. This effective practice creates a pleasant and very safe place for children to be.
- Staff ensure children's safety is a high priority, yet allow for well-calculated risks. As a result, children are extremely confident and self-aware in their environment.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed children's assessment and planning records, regulatory documentation regarding adults' qualifications and suitability and regulatory children's details. He discussed the complaints procedures and the procedures for safeguarding children, and viewed the risk assessments and other pertinent safety documentation.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the deputy. During the course of the day he also held discussions with several members of staff.
 - The inspector undertook an informal shared observation of an adult-led activity with the manager and the deputy.
 - During the inspection, the inspector interacted with children and spoke to some parents.

Inspector

Frank Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

Kittens Pre-School was registered in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register. It is run by a committee as a registered charity. The pre-school operates from within a single-storey purpose-built building located in the Earcroft district of Darwen, Lancashire. It is located alongside a children's centre. The pre-school serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. Children are cared for in an open-plan room with a smaller sensory room and they have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school has a number of pets including a rabbit, guinea pig, rat and giant land-snails.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 68 children on roll in the early years age range. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently eight members of staff, of whom seven work directly with the children. Of these, one holds a degree and another has a foundation degree. One member of staff holds a qualification at level 4 and another four hold level 3. The pre-school is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the exciting experiences already in place by providing chances for children to explore the local area. During such trips encourage the children to explore the print and numbers they see, use technology, such as at road crossings or take pictures of their route to sequence on their return, and consider using public transport so they learn about their world and meet others in the community.

Inspection judgements

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

Children relish their time in this lively and fun place. Staff's high level of awareness about how children learn is clearly evident in the delightful and exciting way that they have organised the children's playroom and outdoor play space. The main room has good space to move around and is well resourced with lots of toys and activities. These readily capture the children's interest and encourage them to explore. For example, a large wall-mounted calculator allows the children to test out technology and experiment with numbers. Outdoors, a group of children explore light and shade as they hide in the play tent. They weave the beams of light from their torches across the roof of the fabric and laugh and talk about it looking like the moon. In the creative area children aged three years demonstrate their maturity and ability to attend to their own needs as they seek and

fit their own aprons. They enjoy creating finger-paint pictures, describing the colours they create as they mix them. Staff ask questions to help them think about which colours they will need to create pink. When complete they confidently hang their pictures on the drying racks with little adult support. In the messy tray they scoop, pour, weigh and balance the dried pulses using the traditional and bucket weighing scales. A set of bathroom scales allows them to weigh themselves and other objects they find in the room.

The arrangements for planning and assessing children's development are robust. Planning for children's progress is based on regular and accurate assessments. This is particularly evident from the excellent way that parents are consulted during settling-in visits, and means that staff have a very good baseline assessment from which to build on children's abilities. Children's learning is then extended through activities that are specific to their needs. Staff help parents understand how different activities in play link to different areas of learning. Staff demonstrate a clear awareness of the need to conduct a progress check for children aged two, should they care for children within this age range. Parents' views about children's learning are invited on a regular basis with daily discussions and termly reviews. Information about the planned activities is included on the notice boards. The curriculum is enhanced through a common theme, such as stories and characters. Imaginative planning by staff helps children have a great deal of fun and make lots of connections to stories that they are familiar with and that have meaning to them. This allows the children to practise their physical skills and consolidate their understanding of what they already know. For example, three pigs in the role play area help children explore their counting and act out stories. Outdoors they follow the events of a favourite contemporary pig character, as they create 'muddy puddles' to splash and slip in. Adults encourage language and vocabulary as they ask children to describe their thoughts and use descriptive words, such as 'squelch' and 'slippery'. Staff's high expectations of what children can do and achieve mean children are developing a wide range of skills and show high levels of maturity for their age. For example, to prepare the muddy puddles the children work together to retrieve the hose. Two boys take responsibility for holding the nozzle and end of the hose. They respond to confirm to the adult when the water is coming through. They learn to follow instructions, take turns and dress themselves as they swap their shoes and wellingtons.

Teaching is based on the staff's very good understanding of how children learn. They are adept at providing an activity that allows children of differing ages and developmental stages to participate alongside each other while their individual challenges are being fully fostered. For example, a simple collection of pictures of pigs are numbered. Children, depending on their ability, are invited to draw and colour, helping their pencil control. Some explore the mastering of a pair of scissors to cut the shapes out, while others match the numbers and the sequence of the cards to tell the story. All the children present fully engage in their activity for long periods of time. This helps them develop a resilience and ability to concentrate while the adult guides their learning without obvious intrusion. The staff have completed and achieved training and accreditation with the ICAN organisation to implement an early talk programme. Group discussions, singing and story times are regularly enjoyed and children use interesting words to describe things, such as 'twirly' when talking about the looped wire on the threading frame. A specialist music and movement teacher has been commissioned to visit for a full day once a week. During this time, children enjoy games to encourage their talking and sing lots of action rhymes. They

eagerly participate in different styles of dance, such as ballet, or move vigorously as they shake maracas in time to the rhythms of Latin music. Children respond with enthusiasm to their changing landscapes within the playroom. For example, staff cover an empty display wall with paper so children can draw with marker pens. However, the staff have not fully explored ways to enhance the excellent activities they provide within the setting by including small focused trips in the immediate or wider environment outside of the pre-school, for example, taking small walks and trips into the local area. This will enhance opportunities for children to explore numbers and print they see, use technology at road crossings, engage with others, for example, as they pay to ride on a bus, or take pictures of their trip to share with others on the electronic smart board on their return. That said, the children enjoy a literacy-rich environment. They self-register seeking their name cards and freely use the clipboards and other writing materials to demonstrate their early writing skills. Laminated pictures of themselves are used to register their presence in specific areas. They match their picture to numerals one to four, which helps them identify who and how many children can play in any area at any one time. Consequently, children are exceptionally well supported to develop the skills that prepare them for their next stages of learning and foster exceptionally well their positive dispositions for future learning.

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

Staff establish very secure emotional bonds with children due to the effective way they help children to settle in. They visit with their parents, and staff spend this time getting to know them. When children start, staff encourage them to bring a bag with special things in. For instance, this may include a favourite toy, book and/or photographs of parents or those that are special to them. This provides an effective form of comfort and helps foster their sense of security as they develop confidence in their new routines. Similarly staff organise space and resources to create a highly stimulating preschool in which the children develop very strong self-help skills. For example, children seek tissues from the nose wiping station and can check their faces and nose are clean in the mirror. They dispose of tissues in the bin and then clean their hands with antibacterial foam. It is this attention to detail that allows the children to move with ease and make choices about what they do and where they do it. For instance, a foam collar placed at the top of the door between the garden and playroom allows children to access and return from the garden as they wish while keeping those children indoors warm. Children are fully supported in using the toilet and these opportunities are used as positive ways to support children to develop self-help skills, such as helping to undress and dress themselves. A water station allows the children to refresh themselves should they become hot and thirsty. Snacks are based on healthy options and children become highly confident in their ability to do things for themselves. They choose when to have snack, help themselves to a plate, select fruit, tomatoes and a sandwich. They pierce their milk carton with a straw and then clear away independently afterwards.

Children confidently interact and engage with visitors and ask why they are here and if they are staying or coming back tomorrow. This demonstrates they feel safe and extremely self-assured. Outside they demonstrate their agility, balance and daring as they climb on the tree, pedal forwards and backwards on the trikes and bob and spin with their friends on the see-saw. They gain a strong sense of keeping themselves safe while

undertaking risks in a safe manner. They climb the tree and use the hand grips to scale the climbing wall, proudly ringing the bell at the top. This achieved they climb back down with speed and agility before they run off to join the others in the sand. Children develop an exceptional understanding of healthy lifestyles as they enjoy experiences based around the teaching of health and the benefits of physical exercise. Children learn how food is grown as they plant, tend, pick and eat foods, such as strawberries, carrots and salad vegetables. This helps them to be aware of the needs of plants and life cycles of growth and decay. Staff are fully aware of each child's unique health or dietary needs and maintain clear records, policies and procedures to ensure that these are addressed appropriately.

Children are extremely busy and engaged in purposeful activity. The staff's polite and calm manner sets an exemplary example to children and they use excellent ways to support the children's understanding of the consequences their actions may have. For instance, staff remind children that they must not place 'Laura the rat' in their hoods but allow her to choose. They ask the children how they would feel if they were placed in a dark tunnel and to imagine how frightened they might be. This places the context in a way that children can make a very strong connection and very secure understanding. Thus, children are gentle and caring when handling the animals. In their play they are respectful and accepting of the need to share with each other. This approach is helping children develop an emotional and social maturity. Transitions to school are very well supported and simple changes for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sensitively implemented. There is a strong and effective partnership with other professionals and services. This ensures children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

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

The provider and staff team have an exceptionally good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met. The setting is exceedingly well organised and the steps put in place ensure that children are kept safe and their well-being is attended to robustly. Arrangements for safeguarding children are rigorous and include a robust recruitment and selection procedure. Staff are fully vetted to ensure that they are of a sound character and have the skills and experience required to support the children in their care effectively. Policies and procedures regarding safeguarding are robustly followed, including those relating to the use of mobile phones. Staff demonstrate a very secure understanding of the steps to follow should they have a concern about a child and how to report such concerns. Details of the committee are available within the documents displayed on the notice board at the entrance of the setting should staff or parents have a concern about the manager or other senior staff. Safety within the premises is implemented exceedingly well. For example, arrangements for first aid are enhanced as the staff are fully familiar with the location and purpose of data sheets for any cleaning materials used within the setting. There are several staff with first aid certificates, and the first aid manuals are tabbed with quick reference labels so that staff can seek further guidance, such as what to do if a child is choking. Staff have practised this as part of a training/risk assessment

procedure. The premises are very clean, well kept and organised. Risk assessment has been conducted and amendments are made immediately should changes occur.

Self-evaluation is based on the views of the staff as well as accepting guidance from the local early years team. Many of the committee are also parents, which allows for parents' perspectives to be considered in all aspects of the management for the setting. For example, it was recognised that the office administrator would benefit from degree training so that she could extend her role further and take a greater responsibility to manage the financial side of the organisation's business. By doing this it has allowed the manager more time to concentrate on the staff management and quality of the learning provision for the children. The staff team is very securely established and has a wide range of early years knowledge, experience and qualifications. The managers and staff meet frequently to discuss any concerns, explore new activities and establish any training needs. Support and monitoring of the children's learning is implemented and the management provides a range of reading materials to support and extend staff's awareness of new initiatives. Staff are able to purchase books about specific practice to ensure that they have the relevant information to support and enhance their practice. Peer observations are developing in a range of ways. For example, staff have recently observed and recorded a baking activity undertaken by the manager, so as to collectively discuss the good practice and identify any potential areas for development. This, along with regular team meetings and joining in with other professionals, such as those that provide the language and music sessions, extends knowledge and provide ways for the staff to develop their professional skills.

A plethora of information is used to engage parents, including a website, handbooks and newsletters. Daily discussion, notices and photographs of the children provide further information about the children's learning and the activities that they enjoy. Parents spoken to hold the setting in high regard and are willing contributors to initiatives, such as undertaking library duties on a rota. Information about the themes and planned activities is displayed and staff provide summaries of children's learning every term. The setting has established first-class partnerships with other relevant agencies and settings. This enables then to ensure that children are robustly supported. Consequently, children benefit greatly. They are happy, secure and safe in this vibrant, highly motivating and yet relaxed and pleasant environment.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY262079
Local authority	Blackburn
Inspection number	949057
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	68
Name of provider	Kittens Pre-School and Nursery Committee
Date of previous inspection	07/03/2012
Telephone number	01254 761 101

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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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