

University of Cumbria

Pre-School Centre

Bowerham Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3JD



Inspection date

23 November 2017

Previous inspection date

8 December 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The management team is truly inspirational. They continually review everything they and the staff do. The management team inspires children, their parents and the staff throughout the pre-school centre in achieving the best that they can through the exceptionally high standards they maintain.
- The quality of teaching of all staff and students is outstanding. They skilfully plan an exceptional range of high-quality experiences for children to help them make excellent progress from their initial starting points. These activities captivate the children's motivation and enthusiasm for learning, which staff expertly challenge and extend.
- Excellent partnerships between parents and the pre-school centre staff are established before children first start. Staff offer flexible settling-in periods and provide a cohesive approach to support each child's development and progress
- Children are extremely happy, settled and confident in their highly stimulating and interesting environment. They develop close bonds with all staff and positive friendships with each other. Children behave very well and help each other to tidy away the resources at routine times during the day.
- The staff's expert knowledge of each child's abilities ensures that all their individual needs are met. The pre-school centre uses additional funding astutely to support children's learning, address gaps and help them to catch up quickly.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to enhance the already outstanding outdoor provision and natural environment.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors, assessing the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the provider and pre-school centre manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider, manager and deputy manager. She looked at all relevant documentation, such as self-evaluation and evidence of suitability of all those working in the pre-school centre facilities.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Carys Millican

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

Safeguarding is effective. Staff are vigilant in promoting children's welfare. They have an excellent knowledge of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child in their care. All documents are excellently maintained. The management team monitors staff's practice and, during supervision meetings, they feedback how skilfully staff shape the learning experiences for children. Professional development and training underpin staff's excellent knowledge and skills, and further enrich children's experiences. Self-evaluation of the provision enables staff to identify focused targets, for example, how to improve the new natural environment for children to explore and investigate. Managers work closely with other professionals and outside agencies to provide each child with a fully inclusive service that meets their needs. Additional funding is used well to support children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

The highly qualified and effective staff team provides children with an exceptionally stimulating and interesting environment. Staff use their excellent expertise in supporting children, including children who speak English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff skilfully plan and adapt activities to each child's preferred style of learning. For example, during a sensory activity some children decide to use spoons to fill containers with ice, while others prefer to handle or throw it. Staff speak clearly and slowly to children. They introduce new words and reinforce and extend children's vocabulary. Older children delight in joining in with favourite stories and singing nursery rhymes. Children confidently and enthusiastically join in additional dance, sport and music sessions with specialised teachers supporting their overall development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children behave extremely well. They understand the importance of sharing and taking turns during activities. Children learn to look after their environment and follow routine tidy-up times. Arrangements to support children's settling in and transition from one group to another are highly effective. Staff obtain a wealth of information from parents at the start and they share key information with staff about children's individual needs and progress. Staff value parents' opinions and involve them in supporting children's learning at home. Children's physical development is well planned for and staff reinforce the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. During dance sessions, children stop and help themselves to a drink as they get thirsty. At mealtimes, children enjoy the social occasion created where they sit together and have either a packed lunch or a freshly cooked meal.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Children are truly inspired and enthusiastic. They make excellent progress given their initial starting points. Children are highly active, independent learners who communicate extremely well. They become confident talkers. Babies babble and laugh, toddlers enjoy

songs and action rhymes and older children are interested in books and stories. Children develop exceptional skills for their future learning and eventual move on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	310284
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	1103584
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	105
Name of registered person	Smartstart (Catterall) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP906305
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2014
Telephone number	01524 63124

University of Cumbria Pre-School Centre registered in 1990 and is situated within the university campus in Lancaster. It is privately owned and managed. The pre-school centre employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6. The owner holds a master's degree in leadership and management and a Montessori nursery teaching qualification. The manager holds early years professional status and qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The pre-school centre provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. They support children who speak English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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