Inspection of Barrowford Preschool Nursery

Wilton Street, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancs BB9 8PU

Inspection date:	12 August 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive at this outstanding setting. Staff know each child extremely well and create a nurturing, thoughtfully planned environment that fosters curiosity and exploration. From the moment children arrive, they demonstrate high levels of independence and confidence and an eagerness to learn. For example, older children arrive excited to continue previous experiences, such as 'geocaching', independently initiating map-making and maintaining deep levels of concentration throughout their play. Children display consistently positive attitudes to learning and make excellent progress across all areas of development. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leaders and staff have designed an ambitious, coherently sequenced curriculum that is expertly and consistently implemented across all age groups. Learning is seamlessly embedded within daily routines. For instance, staff skilfully use mealtimes as purposeful teaching opportunities across the setting. Babies are encouraged to feed themselves, promoting early independence. Older children benefit from high-quality adult interactions, where staff model ambitious vocabulary such as 'digestion' and 'fibre' while exploring food textures. These experiences deepen children's understanding of how different foods support a healthy lifestyle.

Staff have consistently high expectations for all children, and children rise to meet them. They work extremely well with others, showing exemplary social skills, emotional maturity and cooperation. Children take turns, share and support one another, demonstrating a strong sense of empathy and respect. Staff promote personal development exceptionally well, helping children to recognise and regulate their emotions. Children express their needs with confidence and build resilience in both their learning and relationships. As a result, children's behaviour is exemplary.

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

- The experienced and well-established staff team reports feeling consistently supported by leaders, resulting in exceptionally high morale. Leaders implement thorough supervision processes and facilitate ongoing professional development, with clearly defined actions and next steps. The progress of individual staff members is regularly monitored to ensure that enhancements in practice are fully embedded. This helps to drive improvement and further improve outcomes for children.
- The outdoor provision is rich, varied and carefully planned to promote curiosity, exploration and physical development. Children engage in sensory experiences, such as listening to natural sounds, and explore enquiry-based stations, including planting and science. For example, younger children develop hand

dexterity as they create their own versions of ice creams using tools such as tweezers and scoops. When role playing an ice-cream van, staff skilfully extend the activity into a sensory science experience using shaving foam and colour mixing. Furthermore, older children navigate large logs, developing balance, coordination and confidence. Consequently, physical development is consistently well supported.

- Staff support children to develop a love of stories, songs and rhymes. Babies are encouraged to form first words, repeating words such as 'duck' and 'quack'. Toddlers enthusiastically join in actions as staff spontaneously sing songs like 'Incy Wincy Spider' while exploring books about bugs. Additionally, staff seamlessly introduce descriptive language, such as 'mix', to explain stirring motions. As a result, all children rapidly develop language skills and become confident communicators.
- Children's independence is securely embedded in practice and actively encouraged through thoughtful provision. Even the youngest children develop a strong sense of responsibility as they confidently clear their plates and wipe their eating areas. The environment further promotes choice and autonomy, with facilities such as mini urinals supporting independence and fostering discussions about similarities and differences. Additionally, children develop essential safety skills. For example, older children remind visitors to apply sunscreen to protect their skin from UV rays. These experiences effectively equip children with lifelong skills in personal care, safety and self-awareness.
- Early mathematics is supported effectively from the earliest stages. Babies enthusiastically use their fingers to count up to three, developing early number recognition. Children also build an understanding of time by observing a sand timer as it counts down, reminding them to brush their teeth for two minutes. Furthermore, older children are encouraged to identify and explore patterns in their daily play.
- Parent partnership is a real strength. Staff build strong, trusting relationships with families through regular communication and active involvement. Parents feel well-informed and supported, with clear strategies shared to extend children's learning and emotional development at home. This close collaboration fosters a nurturing, inclusive environment where children thrive, both at nursery and beyond.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	309230
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10399387
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	72
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Barrowford Preschool Nursery LTD
Registered person unique reference number	RP523979
Telephone number	01282 698057
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Barrowford Preschool Nursery is situated in Barrowford, Lancashire and was registered in 1984. It employs 23 staff members, of which one holds early years professional status, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 4 and 14 hold an appropriate qualification at level 3. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 7.45am to 5pm, for 48 weeks per year. It offers both term-time and full-time places. The nursery offers government-funded early years education.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Little

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector sampled relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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