

Aston on Trent Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206712
Inspection date	01 November 2007
Inspector	Georgina Walker
Setting Address	Memorial Hall, Chellaston Lane, Aston on Trent, Derbyshire, DE72 2BX
Telephone number	07890748179
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Aston-On-Trent Pre-School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Aston-on-Trent Pre-School opened in 1967. It operates from the Memorial Hall in the village of Aston-on-Trent, Derbyshire. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding villages. The setting opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are Monday to Friday 09:15 to 12:15.

The pre-school is registered to care for 26 children and there are currently 43 children from two years three months to four years four months on roll. This includes 23 children who receive funding for early education.

The pre-school employs 11 part-time staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one has an appropriate degree. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The pre-school is managed by a parental committee of trustees, who delegate day to day responsibility to the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and safety is generally promoted. The setting does not consistently follow appropriate procedures when dealing with minor accidents. Records have limited detail regarding the size and location of the injury, and existing injuries a child arrives with are not recorded confidentially or signed by parents, which does not fully safeguard children. Written consent to administer medication is given by parents. A first aid box is available and contents are suitable to effectively meet the needs of the children. Written consent to seek emergency medical advice and treatment is in place to ensure children's medical needs are suitably met if a serious injury occurs on site. Children learn about personal hygiene through daily routines and are made aware of why they wash hands so there are no germs on them. If children are ill or infectious a written policy regarding exclusion is effectively implemented.

Children's dietary needs are met effectively and healthy eating is promoted. Individual needs are discussed with parents and recorded. Snacks provided are generally healthy and nutritious, for example, children enjoy bread sticks and raisins or yoghurt. Drinks are readily available and children are becoming skilled in helping themselves. Food handling procedures are appropriate.

Physical development is promoted very well. Children have extensive opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities which encourage a positive attitude to healthy exercise. The doors are open to the safety surface area most of the session, allowing children to have free access. Climbing and sliding equipment, wheeled toys, balls and jumping activities are enjoyed by the children. They expertly roll hoops and throw and catch bean bags. Good imaginary play is instigated by the children as they ask staff to tie scarves to their arms as aeroplane wings, and run about with arms out. There is a set routine for use of the resources which contributes to developing large muscle skills. The playroom is occasionally cleared to create space for games, action rhymes or parachute games. The children use an extensive range of construction toys, puzzles and have daily access to paper and drawing resources to develop fine manipulation skills. Consequently, children are able to develop a healthy lifestyle.

The staff positively follow the 'Birth to three matters' framework, although parents are not formally informed of this. Most staff have attended training and have an awareness of the terminology and how to promote children's development through activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm and welcoming, secure and suitable premises where there is sufficient space indoors to play and learn comfortably. The children's safety is inconsistently promoted as the staff do not lift out the required number of tables and chairs to use at snack time and carry the furniture around as children play. Some resources, such as the book corner and role play area are not presented to continually stimulate children to use them. An awareness of safety during a fire is promoted and evacuations have been practised. Other aspects of indoor safety are carefully followed, such as the arrival and collection procedures, when parents wait outside until their child is called to join them, preventing a rush in the entrance hall. Children are also developing an awareness of personal safety as they respond positively to the staff's expectations when they are outside the premises on walks around the village.

Children independently select activities from the range of good quality toys and equipment which are presented each day. They inconsistently show respect of property as books are left on the floor and occasionally puzzles are presented with pieces missing. Resources are stored in labelled boxes on shelves in the store room and used on a rotational basis in 18 toy groups to ensure all children have access to the extensive range over a period of time. Their individual skills develop competently with the age-appropriate resources, although they do not have daily access to activities such as sand, water-play or painting. However, children engage in the worthwhile activities which are presented in the playroom and are encouraged to pack away before group time.

The children's well-being is promoted as the staff attend ongoing training and have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and how to put these into practice. Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures have been received. However, information and references to current legislation and local authority contact addresses are not all included or shared with parents in the written policy files, presented each session on the parent's information table in the entrance hall.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a friendly relationship with the staff, who encourage the children to separate from their parents and access the generally well-presented activities. The children are confident and keen to join in the interesting range of different activities presented each session. Great concentration is shown and an eagerness to spend extended periods in something which stimulates, such as making a spider or building with the construction toys they have requested. Children's developmental progress is promoted under the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff have developed a balanced programme linked to the older children's activities. Plans show which aspect of the framework is linked. However, records of how the child has progressed are not yet fully developed to show what the child needs to engage in next to promote progress. Staff are aware of the Early Years Foundation Stage to be implemented next year and are already planning changes to record keeping to implement this. Children learn to make choices about activities and copy the older children, which leads to them quickly settling into the pre-school. New children are given time to settle in as staff recognise the need for them to relate to a key-worker and become confident to join the other children at play.

All children become purposefully occupied in topics, such as 'celebrations' and eagerly engage in the carefully planned Halloween activities. Parents are aware of themes through the termly information leaflet and how they can extend learning at home. Children learn to share resources with other children, staff and visitors. The staff have been creative in introducing interesting ways for children to learn and enjoy the topics such as 'Going to the seaside' and 'Harvest'. The children develop appropriate socialisation skills as they join in group activities and move between the resources. This ensures the children are usually purposefully occupied and are supported to develop their potential with steady progress.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff record comprehensive detail on weekly planning documents, consistently demonstrating they have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones, early learning goals and how they will present activities. These provide a well-balanced, broad programme and there is evidence of differentiation. Focus activities especially for funded

children include small group activities in the entrance hall, such as board games or cutting and sticking exercises. The learning intention and any discussions are recorded for the parents on each completed task. All activities are effectively evaluated as are other observations. This ensures children benefit from the learning experience to fully assist with planning for their individual future progress. Children's learning is carefully extended as the pre-school have successfully developed the practice of having a key-worker for each child. This enables staff to progress specific learning and generally challenge children to think about what they know. Staff consistently ask open-ended questions, for children think about and respond to. They promote the use of sounds and letters and children eagerly respond and use mathematical language as they create crafts or decorate biscuits. Staff are not aware of the changes within the curriculum guidance to promote children's use of sounds and letters. A variety of methods are used to help children learn effectively. Staff manage the children suitably. Children understand snack time takes place at a certain time and are willing to help tidy up immediately when they are asked to, for group and story time. Children's progress is shared daily with parents. Written information in the folders is available at any time and always at the end of each term.

Topics are enthusiastically enjoyed by the children who suggest ideas of how to develop them. The staff present very interesting and stimulating activities daily and children are eager to share information when talking between themselves or at the snack table. Activities are developed over a period of time, this ensures children's learning is effectively promoted as they are challenged to think by staff to recall relevant words and activities.

Children are well behaved, accepting younger children have yet to learn routines and the expectations of the staff, and are eager to try new experiences. They ask questions about how things work and listen to the responses from staff. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas, such as 'let us pretend to be aeroplanes' and children organise each other to play together with the role play resources, becoming police officers and make marks in a notepad. They share information about their lives outside and have confident personalities, to include visitors in their play and conversations, such as talking about their walk in the woods.

Children do not have the tools to spontaneously copy their own names from name cards, however, they are learning to mark-make with good skills and write some recognisable letters. Some children are aware of the initial letter of their name and use letter sounds spontaneously. The children have access to an extensive range of books, but they are not well used. They enjoy story time and listen and respond appropriately to questions asked by staff, eager to recall the events in the story, repeating new and familiar words and making appropriate sounds and actions.

Children are developing an understanding of mathematics and spontaneously use their knowledge effectively when recognising numerals or count during register time. They are very aware of shapes and eagerly inform staff the shapes of resources used to create spiders or decorate biscuits. Calculation knowledge is significant during snack time when children break breadsticks into pieces, and add and take away as they eat each piece. Children develop problem solving skills, for example when waiting for a place at the café style snack table as four children are already there.

Children have planned access to a limited range of technology and battery operated resources. They learn eagerly about the natural world, when on regular outings to a local allotment or following the Halloween trail in the woods. They write letters and visit the local post office and eagerly wait for the letters to be delivered to their homes as they learn about time. Topics

which introduce them to the needs of others and diversities in society are included and children have daily access to resources which promote positive images of diversity. Consequently, children are learning through carefully planned activities about the world around them.

Children's physical development of fine manipulative skills is promoted effectively through the use of an extensive range of resources. They use scissors with increasing competency, for example, cutting a circle from the square of black paper presented to make a spider's body. Large muscle skills are successfully developed, for example, when they pedal wheeled toys with confidence and stop skilfully, or climb, balance and jump on the wide range of resources presented on a rotational basis in or outdoors. Children's awareness of how their body changes during exercise is an aspect of learning included in topics and referred to by staff after energetic games, such as 'What time is it Mr Wolf?' As a result children's learning in this area is well-balanced.

Children are motivated to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a wide range of craft, role play and singing activities. The loud laughter and smiles on their faces indicates how much they are enjoying themselves. Opportunities to paint, play with sand and water are not sufficiently provided on the otherwise well-planned rota of activities. Children are eager to discuss their work of crafts, drawings or homework sheets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated fairly as the setting has an open-minded approach to inclusion and meeting individual needs effectively. Staff encourage all children to access age-appropriate activities and develop life skills. Individual needs are discussed with parents. However, record sheets for each child do not contain all the detail which enables appropriate care to be given. They do include medical information, especially with regard to food intake and allergies. Children are able to play with a range of non-stereotypical resources and any negative issues are addressed successfully. The children have access to a wide range of toys and resources showing positive images of diversity, culture, gender and disability. Understanding and acceptance of the wider community and the development of positive attitudes is effectively increased.

The pre-school has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and an excellent understanding of potential needs. They proactively support parents and seek help to effectively support children and their parents from outside agencies as necessary. All staff have attended a training session on Makaton sign language and introduce it to all children, using a range of signs each day. Staff are aware to adapt activities to ensure inclusion and have a positive attitude to caring for all children. The designated member of staff is well trained to be the co-ordinator in the setting and the relevant Code of Practice is followed.

There are comprehensive procedures in place to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Children are always given reasons why their behaviour is not acceptable. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Older children behave appropriately as they respond to boundaries set. They are aware of why they must share and take turns, happy to wait until there is an apron to put on to do crafts, as they know only four can join in. This helps children feel secure knowing what they can and cannot do. Good use of praise and encouragement helps to build development of children's self-esteem and they spontaneously use 'please' and 'thank you' at snack times and during activities .

Positive relationships with parents and carers and a desire to work in partnership with them to meet children's individual needs ensures the staff are able to meet emotional and physical needs effectively. A starting point is known for each child and used to progress their learning experiences. Parents are updated on their children's well-being and development through discussion regarding learning and play activities. The setting does not ensure parents are fully aware of policies and procedures and how children will be cared for as some written information on the parent's table is out of date. The certificate of registration is displayed to meet requirements.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Extensive information is provided regarding the early learning goals and plans. The sharing of development documents is well-organised, with a target for next term included after discussion. Parents respond to requests to help on outings or to prepare the snacks and assist children to complete their homework sheets.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are in the care of qualified or experienced staff who are fully supportive to ensure they are settled in the pre-school. A happy atmosphere is evident as children play with a wide range of resources. Suitably planned, developmentally appropriate activities ensure children's time in the pre-school is generally worthwhile and provide suitable levels of challenge for most children. Consequently children are very happy in the setting and are eager to engage in the interesting range of mostly exciting and stimulating activities. The ratios are maintained and children benefit from the key-worker system. However, during times of changing the resources or setting up for snack, safety is not assured. The routine and organisation of the playroom layout is to be monitored effectively. The children's needs are generally met by the setting which maintains their personal records to meet individual needs. However, some records are not fully maintained to promote the welfare of the children at all times. Written policies, some of which require up to date information to be shared with parents, assist in promoting the care and learning of the children. The registration system which monitors all persons on site is robust.

The leadership and management for early education is good. A clear vision has been developed of how the setting will present a wide range of activities to meet the educational needs of the children effectively. The committee, made up of trustees, leave the day to day management to the manager and the planning of the education to the staff group who work with the children. Qualification requirements are met and staff also attend training to raise standards and increase knowledge and broaden children's experiences. The appointment of a leader with a suitable degree has led to the imaginative and inspiring planning of the programme to present the stepping stones to the early learning goals. This ensures the funded children are stimulated to learn and enjoy themselves. Regular support for the staff team during site visits from staff from the local authority assists in the promotion of children's learning and well-being. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the setting agreed to address five recommendations. They were to develop and implement an action plan detailing how at least half of all childcare staff will hold a Level 2 qualification in childcare. This is an ongoing programme. The appointment of a person in charge of the children who holds a degree assures parents the way the rota is managed, that qualification requirements are met above current registration requirements each session.

Three recommendations related to documentation which had been updated to reflect legalisation at the time but require some minor adjustments to meet current requirements. Good hygiene practices were to be in place, with reference to hand washing and drying. This related to the use of the previous hall and do not apply in the new building. However, the design of the new hand washing facility is unsuitable for younger children to access without support from the staff and hinders children's development in their independence. Parents can be assured the setting has addressed each recommendation to ensure regulations are met and children's welfare is promoted.

The pre-school also agreed to the following actions in relation to nursery education. They were to continue to develop the assessment system and use it to inform planning for the future development of individual children. Short term planning was to have clear learning intentions and be based on what children can do to enable more able children to be challenged. The person in charge has an excellent understanding of early learning goals and all aspects are included on a six week rolling basis, skilfully linked to the theme at the time. Focus activity sheet have comprehensive detail for all staff to follow and before each session discussion takes place of what children should learn from each activity planned that day. Differentiation to challenge more able children is included. Their development is recorded with relevant detail and the next steps are successfully included in the plans for the following week. As more staff have obtained qualifications their understanding is also greatly enhanced and they contribute to the children's learning, with two staff taking small groups of older children to engage in tasks which require persistence and concentration. Children are eager to engage in these activities, such as choosing 'furniture' from catalogues which they cut out to create a picture of their ideal house.

Staff have attended training to assist their promotion of providing more opportunities for children to respond, express and communicate their own ideas. Children are given the opportunity to speak to the whole group as they share information at 'show and tell' time or relate where they have been with 'Aston Bear', a soft toy who goes home with a different child each week. Children make choices about some of the resources which will be used during the session as they ask for the file to choose items such as construction toys to play with on the mat. During activities children eagerly talk about what they are doing or life outside the pre-school and staff listen and wait until the child has finished instead of interrupting. The training has prompted staff to listen more to children and has led to greater confidence in children as they communicate in the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- monitor use of routines and resources to ensure children consistently have sufficient to stimulate them and safety is promoted at all times
- ensure children's good health and well-being are consistently promoted, with regard to the recording of accidents and significant injuries a child arrives with, which must be confidential and signed by parents
- further promote the learning of children under three by developing the approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and record progress with purposeful information to plan for individual children's future needs
- ensure children's records contain detail which enables appropriate care to be given and ensure information shared with parents regarding policies and procedures contain reference to current legislation, regulations and programmes of work that children follow.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children learn to hear and say sounds in the order in which they occur and have opportunities to recognise and use letters when mark-making
- ensure children consistently have access to a wider range of resources each session, including technology and free creative activities (also applies to care).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk