

Aston Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Susan Parker
Setting address	Aston Village Hall, ASTON, Hertfordshire, SG2 7ED
Telephone number	07790995175
Email	info@astonpreschool.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Aston Pre-School opened in 1983. The pre-school is a committee run group and operates from the village hall in the village of Aston near Stevenage. The group serves the local community and other areas.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 40 children in the early years age group on roll. The pre-school has good systems in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open five days a week, term time only. Sessions run from 9.15am to 12.15pm and from 12:15pm to 3:00pm. A lunch club is also provided each day. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are eight staff members. Of these, three hold relevant childcare qualifications and two are currently working towards a qualification. Other staff members who do not hold qualifications are highly experienced.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress in their learning and development because staff have a good knowledge of each child's individual needs and interests. All children are fully included and are well supported in participating in the activities and daily routines of the setting. A key strength is the setting's good partnerships with parents, carers and other settings. This promotes consistent welfare and learning for children across the differing settings that they attend. Children are developing their independence and self-esteem, they are developing an understanding of keeping themselves safe and are adopting some healthy routines. Staff are beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure a consistent approach to developing children's understanding of good health and hygiene practices
- develop further an effective system of self-evaluation to identify strengths and target areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted as there are robust safeguarding procedures. These are fully supported with secure induction procedures for staff and parents. This ensures that the setting's responsibilities are clearly understood and staff keep up to date with training, reviewing this area of work regularly at staff meetings to ensure that all are able to work together to protect children. Stringent checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Thorough risk assessments and daily checks ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as the provision of nutritious snacks and routine hand washing enables children to begin to develop healthy routines. However, staff are not consistent in supporting children to develop an effective understanding of preventing the spread of germs when they cough or blow their noses. Therefore, children's understanding of the relevance of these practices is not fully promoted.

The management committee and senior staff have a clear vision for the future, involving staff and parents in reviewing the setting's practice. Feedback is taken positively and the manager prioritises actions, introducing changes and reviewing the impact of these. They have begun a self-evaluation of aspects of the effectiveness of the provision; however, this is not yet complete, therefore, is not fully effective in highlighting the strengths and qualities of daily practice or identifying areas for further improvement.

Staff are supported in attending further training and gaining qualifications. This helps create a positive learning environment, where both children and staff thrive. Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development. For example, staff are deployed effectively and good use is made of community facilities, such as visitors from the emergency services and effective links with local schools and children's centre. Staff are very well organised in the daily setting up and putting away of all resources for each session. They have formed very effective systems to create a warm and welcoming environment for children using bright posters and wall displays which are carefully stored away at the end of each day to enable the village hall to be used for other members of the community.

The staff have a good understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They make sure that they understand each child's capabilities, background, cultures and belief. Staff provide a very good selection of interesting and challenging activities that all children can participate in equally. For example, staff use all the children's senses in their learning. Children learn about shapes through looking at it, feeling how many sides or points it may have and learning the names. This is very successful as children can recognise and name complex shapes such as semi-circle, hexagon and pentagon as easily as squares and circles. Children's self-esteem is well promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about their beliefs, families and recent experiences. The good use of resources, such as posters and books, provides positive images and helps children to feel welcome and valued.

Good communication with all parents and carers results in good partnership

working. Parents receive thorough information about the setting, for example, through the informative notice board, daily talks with staff and 'coffee mornings' where parents can view their children's assessment files and talk with key workers. The provision for a daily lunch club provides extended care for parents. Staff pick up children at the local nursery who attend the lunch club and some stay for the afternoon session. Staff also form good professional partnerships with childminders and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enhances a coherence of learning and development across different settings and relates to the children's experiences at home.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are supported in achieving because staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They observe and assess children as they play, using this information to evaluate their progress and plan their next steps.

The environment is attractive and generally accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. For example, children are able to choose to play outside when the weather is fine. They practise their pedalling skills on the bikes and negotiate turn taking when choosing their favourites. Children's learning experiences are further enhanced as staff interact with the children as they play by asking appropriate questions to develop children's critical thinking and enabling them to solve problems. For example, children understand that they cannot make the seesaw work on their own and know that the staff are 'too heavy' to make it work effectively. Children feel a sense of belonging as they see their own pictures and photographs of themselves displayed around the hall.

Staff use their knowledge of each child to make the best use of their individual learning styles and interests to promote their development. For example, they provide a good range of activities where the children need to use their senses. Children can smell and taste cooking activities; they listen carefully to instructions and are confident to talk in large groups during 'show and tell' sessions. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included and staff use creative ideas to ensure that they can fully participate, therefore, effectively narrowing the gaps. Children's personal independence skills are promoted as they can use the toilets and dress themselves independently with staff supporting the children when necessary. They are adopting healthy lifestyles adequately. Children routinely wash their hands after using the toilet or painting and before eating. Staff use routines and gentle reminders to encourage children to develop some good hygiene routines. Children can access tissues and are aware of where to dispose of them, although staff are not always consistent in reminding them. Therefore, not all children are developing an understanding of keeping themselves healthy and preventing the spread of germs.

Children's emotional development is promoted as they develop secure relationships with the staff. Children show great pleasure when they arrive, greeting both staff and friends by name and eagerly updating them on recent events. The consistent

approach to behaviour management enables children to feel secure and develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour. They show care and concern for each other, sharing resources and showing an awareness of children who are less able than themselves. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to work together to sort out any issues. Children respond positively and demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their behaviour. Children's understanding of diversity is developed as they participate in regular discussions, access relevant resources and celebrate festivals that reflect their beliefs.

Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported in developing their knowledge of English. Staff value the children's own language and learn key words and pictures to communicate effectively. For example, the daily routine is set out in picture form so the children can see what is happening next. The setting's good procedures for working with parents and other professionals mean that children who have special educational needs are offered appropriate and consistent support to enable them to participate and make good progress.

Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They are confident and are, therefore, actively involved in their learning, developing good personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility for small tasks such as tidying away at the end of the session. Children benefit from a good mix of adult-led and child initiated activities that foster active learning. They happily select resources and play independently or with other children and staff. Children are encouraged to be active learners and explore, developing skills for the future as they share ideas and work together. For example, children using a construction set discuss their models, comparing heights and adding pilots or adding wheels to their towers to make aeroplanes or buses. Children have opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills. Children enjoy making marks and learn to use paint brushes and pencils. They are able to use tools such as scissors and cutlery safely, honing their abilities with more challenging activities as their co-ordination and manipulative skills develop.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met