

Alderton Acorns Pre-school Toddler and Baby Groups

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	101702
Inspection date	26/01/2010
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting address	Alderton Village Hall, Dibden Lane, Alderton, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8NT
Telephone number	07842 161 159
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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

Alderton Acorns Pre-school Toddler and Baby Groups is run by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children at the group. It was registered in 1994 and operates from the village hall at Alderton near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. Local amenities include the post office, church and village school. The pre-school uses the main hall and small room, and children have access to an enclosed garden with paving and grass. The group is open during term time on Monday to Thursday from 9am until 12 noon. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 16 children in the early years age group on roll, aged from two years nine months. There are five members of staff who are supported by parents on a rota. Of these, one has qualified teacher status and three hold appropriate qualifications in early years or childminding. There is one member of staff currently working towards a Level 3 qualification in childcare and education. The pre-school provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. Operational links are in place with other early years providers, including local schools.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall, the pre-school successfully meets the needs of all children through recognising their uniqueness to provide an inclusive, welcoming and caring service. Children make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their learning and development as they enjoy their time in the group and are eager to be actively engaged in the choice of interesting play activities. Those in charge work in close partnership with other agencies and some providers to ensure that children's learning and welfare needs are met. The commitment of the staff and in-depth reflection ensures that plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- build links with other providers offering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that adults communicate and work together to benefit each child through continuity in their learning
- continue to extend staff's understanding about providing different learning opportunities for individual children or groups who may need extra support or more challenge.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Documentation is clearly organised and policies, including that for behaviour, are being revised to reflect the good practice in the group. All adults left in sole charge of children are vetted, as are a significant number of parents. Staff have a secure understanding about the procedures for safeguarding in case of any concern about a child. The premises are secure and safe for children to move around freely as risk assessment is thorough and ongoing. The hall is spacious and well divided into areas to give a feeling of security. A good range of high quality resources are attractively arranged both in and out of doors for the children to use as they wish. These are rotated regularly to effectively stimulate children's interest. Young ones make good use of bright, topical displays to enhance their learning, for example, about recycling.

Staff are well qualified overall and motivated to attend additional training to further develop their practice and outcomes for children. They work particularly well together as a team, being effectively deployed to support the children's interests and ideas. This means that best use is made of each adult, including rota helpers, as they support group situations and move around where needed, rather than being in a given area. As a result, the pre-school has high regard to promoting equality and diversity so that all children's learning and welfare needs are individually considered. Staff diligently seek and follow professional advice and training from local agencies, though have not yet accessed training on supporting children's additional requirements, for example, special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Partnerships with parents and carers is strong. There is a good exchange of information between the group and parents which enables staff to meet children's individual needs. Ongoing information is shared through informal feedback at the end of the session, regular newsletters, emails and informative boards. Parents attend sessions with key persons each term when they discuss and further contribute to their child's learning scrapbooks that are always available. A rota duty system enables parents to help out at the group on a regular basis. Parents speak highly of the quality of care their children receive and the caring attitude of the staff. They are very well involved in their children's learning, for example, as they provide weekend care for 'Fred the Ted' with his case and camera to record his activities. Where children attend other registered settings, good links have been built with some of these providers. This is to ensure that all adults involved with the children contribute to the continuity of their learning and care.

The pre-school's leadership and management are highly effective in driving improvement. Rigorous self-evaluation is ongoing and well includes the views of staff, parents and children. The play leader stimulates the enthusiasm of the staff and channels their efforts to good effect. Good use is routinely made of rigorous monitoring so that areas of weakness have been systematically tackled through building on areas of strength. There has been a very good response to the actions and recommendations made at and since the last inspection. These related to safeguarding, the complaints log, observational assessment, individual support by

key persons, partnership with parents and children's behaviour and independence. Target setting is now realistic and challenging; consequently outcomes for children are good.

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

Children arrive happily at the pre-school; warm reassurance from staff and clear explanations about the day's special activities help them to settle well. The children are highly motivated by the attractive, stimulating range of activities and play opportunities that support all areas of their learning. From a young age, they select toys and activities to use in their own way which supports their growing independence. Children well develop their creative skills as they sing and experiment with patterns of sounds of musical instruments. They explore freely to create models, design their own patterns and investigate textures of leaves and conkers added to clay. Children of all ages enjoy new challenges. They effectively use their imaginations when playing as knights in castles. Their learning is very well supported by the availability of resources to combine with others, such as sorting toys that are used in complex role play as 'food' for the 'king's household'. Children become very independent to see to their own needs, such as personal hygiene, dressing for outdoor play and taking responsibility for organising their drink and food. Children enjoy snuggling up with staff to look at books and listen intently to join in with their own comments. They speak confidently to the whole group about themselves and their families and share ideas at sociable snack times.

Staff carefully plan in and outdoor activities based on their close observations of the children's activity and their expressed interests. They have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage to support children's learning through their play. This means that all children make good, and sometimes very good, progress towards the early learning goals. Their achievements are observed and recorded in detailed learning scrapbooks, along with their next steps that are well shared with parents. The children have very good ownership and are proud of these records that include clear starting points and contributions from parents in 'super hero' cards that detail achievements at home. Their key persons have a secure understanding about the children's ages and stages. As a result, they effectively support individuals to gain self-esteem and competently monitor their progress towards the early learning goals.

The children's good health and well-being are effectively promoted. Their understanding of hygiene is actively fostered through use of pictures of their friends washing their hands. Children are eager to play in the accessible, outdoor space that contains good quality equipment and natural materials; they confidently bring tools and materials they want from indoors, including items to make sand castle flags. Active play in the garden and indoors encourages children to develop their physical skills as they balance and run freely and develop their physical control, including the manoeuvring of wheeled toys. Children gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe; they practise leaving in an emergency, climb on the challenging frames and handle large items with increasing control, including boxes and blankets. Children have good opportunities

to explore their environment as they go on visits, for example, to the school and village shop to buy vegetables.

Children gain good skills for the future. They confidently make decisions and take responsibility, for example, to tidy the play areas. The adults have a calm and friendly manner and are positive role models. This helps children to be polite and manage their own behaviour by, for example, negotiating about play in a 'castle' using a sand timer. Staff are consistent as they distract praise, encourage and explain in ways that are always appropriate to the individual's age and understanding. Children benefit from the staff's enthusiasm and offers of close interaction and involvement in their play. Their language development is well fostered as they talk with adults throughout the sessions and learn new words, such as 'armour' and 'breezy'. They gain good early reading and writing skills, for example, recognising their names and symbols and making marks with varied materials in the writing corner. Children thoroughly enjoy using technology to support their learning, choosing computer programs and deftly operating the mouse to continue the matching game or story. They are keen to solve problems by including numbers and positional language in their play and confidently take one away in group songs, such as 'Five green bottles'. Children gain good self-help skills and are confident to make decisions so they are well prepared for transition from the pre-school to school.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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