



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146425

DfES Number: 546032

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	03/12/2003
Inspector Name	Margaret Coyne

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Aston Pre-School
Setting Address	Aston Village Hall ASTON Hertfordshire SG2 7ED

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Aston Pre-School 1091828
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Aston Pre-School
Address	Aston Village Hall New Park Lane, Aston Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 7ED

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Aston Pre-School opened in 1998. 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.

There are currently 44 children from 2 years 6 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 5 funded 3 year olds and 9 funded 4 year olds. The group has systems in place to support children with special needs although no children with special needs are attending at present. The group supports children with English as a second language.

The pre-school is open four days a week, term time only. Sessions run from 9.15 to 11.45 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday with additional sessions from 12.30 to 14.45 on Tuesday and Wednesday. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are six members of staff working in the pre-school, of which two are part time. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ level two or three and BTEC. There are two members of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Aston Pre-School provides satisfactory care for children. The premises are well managed with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The operational plan covers all areas of the day-to-day running of the pre-school. Children are grouped well with good staff support and a variety of resources. The pre-school leader is committed to extending her training and knowledge and also that of her staff through regular meetings and appraisals. Most records, policies and documentation are in place for the safe and efficient management of the pre-school. These are well organised and held in a confidential manner.

Space is used effectively, for indoor and outdoor activities. The room is laid out, prior to the children's arrival, so it is inviting and welcoming to encourage children to play. However care must be taken to ensure the room is maintained at a suitable temperature. Staff show a high level of awareness of risks to children's health and safety and suitable precautions are taken to ensure risks are kept to a minimum. However care must be taken to ensure children do not have access to certain areas.

Staff organise play materials well, providing children with some purposeful, stimulating and interesting activities that the children enjoy. Staff are fully involved with the children, support their play and build warm and trusting relationships. Staff use encouragement and praise for the children of all ages and their achievements are acknowledged. Suitable systems are in place to assess and monitor any child with special needs. Staff implement the behaviour management policy consistently, children are aware of the boundaries and are well behaved.

There is satisfactory information shared with parents both written and displayed on site. Verbal feedback is given to parents by staff if requested and parents are encouraged to become involved with the pre-school through the parent rota, events and the committee.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider agreed to update information on the setting to include details of the regulator. This is now in place, all details are well presented in the information pack for parents.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy a range of interesting and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. These are well presented to encourage children to take part in activities.
- Staff are fully involved with the children and are attentive to their needs. Children relate well to each other i.e. praising each others work and playing cooperatively. Most children are confident and their feelings of security are well fostered by staff. Staff respond to children's interests and give praise and encouragement at all times.
- Staff implement the behaviour management policy well and children respond to direction from staff. Behaviour is generally good from most children attending.
- Staff have established effective partnerships with parents and carers. Information is regularly shared, appropriate consents are in place and confidentiality is maintained.

What needs to be improved?

- the method of recording children's arrival and departure times

- the temperature in the hall
- safety, regarding children's access to the kitchen and small room
- the child protection policy, to include the procedure to follow if allegations are made against a member of staff.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Ensure children's arrival and departure times are recorded
4	Ensure rooms are maintained at a suitable temperature
6	Ensure that children do not have access to the kitchen and small room except with direct staff supervision
13	Ensure a procedure is included for any allegations made against a member of staff

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Aston Pre-School is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals. They use detailed plans to ensure all areas of learning are met. Children's assessments take account of the stepping-stones and staff use these for future planning. Staff are generally well deployed throughout the session offering guidance and support to the children. Staff develop children's language and listening skills well, and introduce children to new vocabulary through topics and activities. However few opportunities are provided to introduce children to record and count in everyday situations and to develop an understanding that print carries meaning. Good systems are in place to support children with special educational needs. A wide range of purposeful activities and opportunities are provided to encourage children to explore and express themselves. Children behave well and respond to direction from staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. The committee plays an active role in the group and works closely with the dedicated play leader and committed team of staff. The group continually monitors and evaluates their practise in order to provide an effective educational programme.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents receive good information about the group. However they have few opportunities to see the activity plans in order to extend learning at home. They are given opportunity to talk informally with staff and have built good relationships with them. However more opportunity could be provided for parents to gain information about their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children's curiosity and imagination is skilfully developed as they explore self-selected activities such as the role-play area and physical area. They work and play independently and are well supported by staff.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority, which enables the children to feel settled, happy and confident in the group. They have developed a good understanding of right and wrong, are forming attachments, play co-operatively and share resources well.
- Children are confident speakers and listeners, they use language to express themselves and interact with other children and adults. Staff foster children's

language skills well by introducing new vocabulary through topics and activities.

- Staff have developed effective assessment systems, which clearly show children's progress in the foundation stage, these are used to develop future plans and targets for children's learning.
- Children are involved with the local environment, enjoy trips out into the surrounding countryside. They gain a good knowledge of living things, for example growing their own seeds and examining the life cycle of the butterfly.

What needs to be improved?

- the deployment of staff during large group story sessions
- the use of labels around the room
- the opportunities for children to record and use numbers in everyday play situations
- parent's access to activity plans and opportunities to gain information about their child's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection. Staff employed at the time received more training in order to gain a full awareness in providing challenging activities for the children, especially the older children attending. These staff have since left, but the group recognises training needs and staff endeavour to extend children's learning in all areas. However, more improvement should be made in some areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident learners and concentrate well. They have developed a strong sense of belonging through positive interaction with other children and adults in the group. Children's independence skills are well fostered by the staff as they make their own choices in activities and take care of personal hygiene. Children have developed positive self-image and self esteem, they are proud of their achievements and happily talk about and show their work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and listeners; they happily relate personal experiences that are special to them. Most children enjoy story sessions but some became bored during this time. Staff foster children's vocabulary introducing new words and encourage conversation. Few opportunities are provided for children to see that print carries meaning with the use of labels around the room. Children experiment and practise writing skills using a range of equipment and can write their own name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing a good awareness of number, they count confidently to ten and beyond and recognise numbers in planned activities. However there are few opportunities for children to record and use numbers in everyday situations. Staff introduce children to mathematical language in planned and spontaneous activities. Children can sort items by size, length and colour. Children's awareness of shape is well developed using a variety of tools such as blocks, shapes and train tracks.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children take part in activities that develop an interest in the world around them; they explore the local environment and enjoy visits from 'people who help us'. Children learn about growth and change through topics such as the life cycle of the butterfly and frogs and growing seeds. Children's design and making skills are well fostered using a range of materials, equipment and techniques. Children gain an awareness of cultures and beliefs through interesting activities such as food tasting.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children have opportunities to climb, balance and jump using equipment both inside and out and experiment with different ways to move around the room. Large motor skills are developed with the use of the climbing frame and parachute where they use their bodies to obtain the desired effect. Children are able to manipulate tools with skill and dexterity, for example threading beads, lacing cards, using scissors, glue spreaders, rollers and cutters for play dough and pouring sand and water.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children are able to express their own ideas individually and spontaneously. They are able to explore colour, texture and shape and build two and three-dimensional models. Children's imaginations are well fostered and supported by the staff where they can participate in familiar role-play situations such as a pizza hut, shop and post office. Children have the opportunity to use musical instruments and take part in music and movement sessions. They enjoy familiar songs and sing with enthusiasm.	

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- increase opportunities for children to use words and labels around the room to develop word recognition and understand that print carries meaning
- increase opportunities for children to record and use numbers in everyday situations
- provide opportunities for parents to access planning, to give them information about the early learning goals in order to extend learning at home
- provide more opportunities for parents to access information about their child's progress.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.