



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219921

DfES Number: 516009

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	20/09/2004
Inspector Name	Mark Evans

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Alpha Pre-School Playgroup
Setting Address	Westfield Terrace Higham Ferrers Rushden Northamptonshire NN10 8BB

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Alpha Pre School 1029418
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Alpha Pre School
Address	Adult School, Westfields Terrace Higham Ferrers Rushden Northamptonshire NN10 8BB

## 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

Alpha Pre-school is a committee run group, which has provided a service for approximately 37 years. It operates from the adult school premises in Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. Children have access to a main group room and the toilet/wash facilities. There is an outdoor area adjacent to the premises for children's physical play and activities. The setting serves the local community, which is predominantly English speaking.

There are currently 24 children on roll, of these 11 receive funding for nursery education. The group currently supports children with special educational needs. There are no children attending for whom English is an additional language. The pre-school is open five mornings and three afternoons a week during school term time. Morning sessions run from 09:00 to 11:30; afternoon sessions from 12:30 to 15:00. Children attend a variety of sessions each week

Four part-time staff work with the children. One holds a level three qualification and two have level two qualifications. The pre-school receives support from a mentor teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is affiliated to the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

### How good is the Day Care?

Alpha Pre-school Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children. The environment is welcoming, the premises are maintained to a satisfactory standard and there are sufficient facilities for children's care and play. Arrangements for staffing ratios provide supportive adult care for children, however arrangements to ensure all staff are fully vetted are not yet in place. There is an informal staff induction, which includes awareness of policies and procedures. Documentation is generally in good order and well organised.

Written risk assessments are completed to minimise hazards and most aspects of safety are satisfactory. The setting provides healthy snacks for children to encourage them to develop good dietary habits, although drinking water is not

always available. The staff have satisfactory knowledge of child protection issues and procedures, however the child protection policy is not yet fully comprehensive. Children are encouraged to use good hygiene practices, for example, to wash hands after toileting.

The staff have positive relationships with the children and they encourage co-operative attitudes. Adults within the setting are caring and attentive to the children they show interest in and value what they say and do. Children's behaviour is managed effectively, using praise to promote good behaviour and self esteem. There are resources and events that promote positive images of diversity and staff make sure that children have equal access to all activities within the pre-school. The setting supports children with special needs and is looking to develop staff further in this area.

The setting has a positive and constructive attitude towards working with parents and has established regular verbal exchange, notices, newsletters and meetings to review children's progress. Confidential records are kept in order to have relevant contact details, to meet the individual care needs and to monitor children's development.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Staff are caring and attentive to the needs of children and provide good emotional support for them, helping them to settle, feel secure and develop confidence in being separated from their main carer.
- Staff offer children praise and encourage them to take turns and share. Children are aware of the boundaries set and as a result behave well.
- Good relationships are established with parents through effective communication and regular exchanges of information.
- Record keeping and documentation is well organised and in good order, which indicates a professional attitude and underpins the smooth and safe running of the provision.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- arrangements for newly appointed staff to undergo vetting procedures, including a criminal records check
- provision of operational procedures for the safe conduct of any outings provided
- availability of fresh drinking water for children at all times
- the child protection policy, to include the procedures to be followed in the

event of an allegation being made against a staff member or volunteer.

#### **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
8	Ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.
13	Make sure that the child protection procedure includes the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member or volunteer.
1	Ensure that newly appointed staff undergo vetting procedures, including a criminal records check.
6	Ensure that there are operational procedures for the safe conduct of any outings provided.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Alpha Pre-school playgroup provides nursery education, which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Provision for their physical and creative development is well organised and they make very good progress in these areas.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff manage the children very well and have good relationships with them, which helps to support their learning. They encourage co-operation and praise children for their efforts and good behaviour to develop their personal and social skills. The staff organise the rooms well and display children's creative work to present a warm, stimulating environment.

The staff have limited knowledge of the foundation stage and although the curriculum is planned, not all staff are aware of the area of the learning intentions for focussed activities. Staff undertake observations of what children do and have a system for the assessment of children's development. This information is used to help identify and plan for what children could usefully do next. Staff support children with special needs through liaison with parents and relevant agencies and use of targets which helps children to progress effectively, however they have limited knowledge of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are generally good. The manager has a lead role for the planning and monitoring of the curriculum. The setting has periodic appraisals for staff development; has informal systems for reviewing its practice and uses support from other agencies to develop its education programme.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents receive written and verbal communications from the pre-school linked to the educational provision and are able to have some involvement in the assessment of their child's progress. Staff have positive relationships with parents.

### What is being done well?

- Partnership with parents is very good; the setting has effective levels of communication with parents. They receive good written information, which informs them of the setting policies and curriculum. Parents have regular verbal contact with the staff; they have a six monthly meeting with staff, which informs on how the child is developing and provides opportunity to discuss the child's progress.
- The setting makes effective use of its observations and assessments of what children can do to ascertain what they could usefully do next in terms of their development. This information is then used to guide the planning of the curriculum.

- Staff manage children's behaviour very well. They know the children well and work closely with the children. They offer praise and encouragement which helps to develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- staff's knowledge of the foundation stage and awareness of the learning intentions for focussed activities
- planning for children's mathematical development so that the curriculum provides more practical opportunities to explore shape, space and measurement
- opportunities to develop children's understanding of the importance of print and to recognise that print has meaning
- staff's knowledge of and regard to the Special Educational Needs code of Practice.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Very good progress has been made in tackling the key issues identified in the previous inspection report. These required the pre-school to provide regular role-play opportunities to extend children's opportunity to use the language of imagined experiences; increase the profile of the book corner to further foster their enjoyment of books and to review the records of children's progress to ensure that they are manageable.

The setting now includes role play in its short term planning and this is provided on a daily basis, with a variety of resources provided for various scenarios, eg hospital, home corner, laundrette, etc. This provides children with regular opportunity to use the language of imagined experiences and to develop their understanding of their own experiences and observations. There is a book corner area for children's use, which has a case to display the books, seating and a rug to make a comfortable area and encourage use of books. Children were observed to choose books for enjoyment on some occasions. Records kept for children's progress now indicate which level they are at in terms of their development in line with the stepping stones and early learning goals and were judged to be appropriate for this purpose. This enables staff to plan for what children could usefully do next.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children generally show good levels of concentration and involvement in activities. They interact co-operatively within groups and behave well, which is conducive to a calm environment. Younger children are showing confidence in being separated from their main carer. Children are developing independence skills, although there are some missed opportunities at snack time. Children are gaining awareness of their own community through local walks and visits from other agencies.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children chose books for enjoyment and use them appropriately, left to right. They have opportunities to use language for expressing imaginative ideas within their play. Children are able to respond to simple instructions. Some more able children can recognise their name. There are missed opportunities for children to associate meaning to print. Children draw and paint and sometimes ascribe meaning to marks and attempt writing for different purposes.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Some, more able children can count to nine and also recognise numbers up to nine. Children are starting to use numeric mathematical language and are becoming familiar with numbers. They are able to follow instructions of positional language, although generally have limited opportunities to develop knowledge of space, three dimensional shapes and measurement. Children have opportunities to combine two sets of objects and use simple subtraction, for example, within songs and rhymes.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children select materials to design, join, shape. They have a sense of place within their local community and an awareness of other people. Children have developing ability to operate simple equipment, although the availability of communication technology resources and programmable toys is limited. They explore and study living things and patterns of change and are developing knowledge of how tools are used.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are developing good spatial awareness and move confidently around each other. They are able to climb up, through and under large apparatus. They use a range of different tools with increasing control to make changes to materials, scribe, pour, form and construct. Children learning about health and bodily awareness. They engage in healthy practices, including good hygiene routines, healthy eating and physical exercise.

<b>CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children are developing awareness of colour through a variety of media. They use a different role-play settings to enact their imagined experiences and they also express their imagination with activities and resources which include painting, modelling, water play and drawing. Children enjoy singing; they can recall familiar songs and associated actions. They experience different types of music, use instruments to explore how sounds can be changed and rhythmic patterns.	
<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>	



## 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

- develop staff's knowledge of the foundation stage and ensure that they are aware of the learning intentions for focussed activities so that they can help children make progress more effectively
- improve planning for children's mathematical development so that the curriculum provides more practical opportunities to explore shape, space and measurement
- provide opportunities to develop children's understanding of the importance of print and to recognise that print has meaning
- ensure that all staff have knowledge of and regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

*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.*