

Aston Clinton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY235054
Inspection date	07/03/2011
Inspector	Sonjia Nicholson
Setting address	Anthony Hall, London Road, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5NA
Telephone number	01296 630877
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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

Aston Clinton Pre-School opened in 1967. It is a committee-managed group that operates from Anthony Hall in the village of Aston Clinton on the outskirts of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. It serves the local community and surrounding villages. The premises consist of a main hall, a small committee room that is used as a welcome room for parents, a kitchen, toilets and a small enclosed outside play area.

The pre-school is open during term times only, on Monday and Fridays, from 9.00am to 2.30pm. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, sessions run from 9.00am until 12 noon. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children in the early years age group, no more than 12 of whom may be under three years, and none of whom may be under two years. There are currently 50 children on roll. The pre-school receives funding for free early education.

There are seven staff, five of whom hold childcare qualifications to at least level 2. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the Buckinghamshire Early Years and Childcare Service.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in this well-organised setting. Staff work well together and implement a number of effective systems to ensure children's needs are met and they make good progress in their learning and development. The setting demonstrates a good capacity for continuous improvement, and the provider has met the recommendations set at the last inspection. Staff constantly evaluate all aspects of their practice and involve children and parents in making decisions within the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- organise group times to meet the individual needs of all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff give high priority to keeping children safe. They have all undertaken safeguarding training and are familiar with the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. Details of these concerns are logged and discussed with parents. In her role as the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Pre-School Leader takes responsibility for dealing with any issues and making referrals. The setting has its own safeguarding policy and a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, which they share with parents so they are aware of the responsibility staff have to protect children. Policies regarding the use of mobile telephones and cameras have been devised and implemented in light of recent high profile cases of child abuse. All staff wear a uniform so they are easily identified within the setting; they ensure visitors sign the visitors book, and are aware of where the fire exits are and the drill to follow in the event of a fire. Children practise the evacuation procedure every half term over several days, so they all know how to leave the building quickly and safely. Staff log these details for future reference. As a precaution, fire safety equipment including extinguishers, a fire blanket and illuminated exit signs are present. Risk assessments have been completed for all areas of the building and outdoor area and staff also complete a daily check. Visitors providing extra services and activities, such as tennis lessons, are required to provide a risk assessment; this means children take part in safe activities and play in a safe environment. Four staff are trained in first aid and of these, usually three are on duty at each session; this means they are able to deal with minor injuries to children using items from the fully stocked first aid box. Resources are deployed effectively. Staff set out a wide range of toys, resources and activities each day within the large hall. They create areas for messy play, a comfortable place to look at books and a small world play area. They also set up tables for mark making, investigation and problem solving. Children initiate some activities; for example, they choose to get the dressing-up box and dinosaurs out. Staff recognise children as individuals and tailor their care accordingly, which means children's individual health needs are fully met. There are ample opportunities for children to learn about the world around them; for example, they celebrate Chinese New Year by creating a restaurant in the role play area, tasting Chinese food, practising Chinese writing and playing with wet and dry rice. Staff supplement the resources available within the setting with items borrowed from the Minority and Ethnic Traveller Achievement Service, and invite parents from other backgrounds in to talk to the children about their culture. Children with special educational needs are well-supported. Staff work closely with parents, other professionals to ensure all children have equality of opportunity and make progress.

The pre-school leader acts as an excellent role model for the team; she is committed to the continual improvement of the setting and works with parents, staff and children to make changes for the better. She genuinely values their contribution and acts upon their suggestions; for example, children have recently been involved in naming the new pre-school bear, and changes have been made to the registration process and times of opening at parents' request. The pre-school leader is well supported by the active committee who appreciate her drive and enthusiasm. Through the self-evaluation process and involvement of

Buckinghamshire Early Years and Childcare Service, the pre-school leader has identified areas for development and has devised an on-going action plan. Staff have developed good relationships with other settings, in particular the local school, so that children have a smooth transition from pre-school. Teachers visit the pre-school to observe the children in a familiar environment and pre-school staff accompany children on several settling-in visits at school. The pre-school leader has undertaken visits to observe children who attend other settings. Parents have a wealth of information regarding the setting, including written policies and procedures that they are encouraged to read and review, as well as several notice boards and regular newsletters. Staff encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning by displaying simple ideas and facts about recent themes so they can share these at home, for example, about Chinese New Year. Very positive comments made by parents during the inspection reflect how happy they are with the service provided'.

All aspects of the pre-school are well organised. The staff team work well together and carry out their tasks efficiently that means the sessions run smoothly. For example, while two members of staff organise group times, the others prepare the food and tables for snack time. The pre-school leader deals with unplanned situations, such as a power cut, calmly and effectively. Many staff attend training courses to keep up to date with current practice and gain new skills.

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

Children are happy and settled. They play cooperatively with only minor squabbles that they manage to sort out by themselves with no adult intervention. Children are familiar with the routine; for example, they respond positively to the sound made by a tambourine used to signal tidy-up time and begin to pack toys away. They further demonstrate they feel safe as they move confidently around the setting and approach known adults and are not alarmed when the power goes off; they accept the pre-school leader's explanation and continue to play. Children have daily access to the enclosed outdoor area, where there are plans to fit a new safety surface and fence in the near future. They have free-flow play for part of the session and can choose whether to play inside or outside. A small group of children play inside the pop-up tents and pretend it is their house, others enjoy using chalks to make marks on the fence and ground and others play with water. Staff occasionally take children off-site on walks and outings to extend their learning. They walk to the post box to post letters, talk to police officers doing speeding checks in their car park and have had a teddy bear's picnic at the local park. Inside, children use a variety of tools to develop their physical skills; for example, they use spoons to dig the cornflour and water mixture, then take great delight in watching it drip off, and they make marks using pencils, paper and clipboards at the mark making table. During messy play activities, children can choose whether to wear an apron to protect their clothes. However, many choose not to, and staff do not impose this on them. Snack time is a sociable affair where children sit with their key person at the table and have the opportunity to chat freely and develop their table manners. They independently help themselves to melon, banana, pear and grapes from the plate and pour their own water from a

jug, or milk from the plastic carton.

Children make a positive contribution to the setting as they are actively involved in making decisions, such as what learning aids they want in their new outdoor area. They share their ideas for planned activities and are involved in creating a pictorial risk assessment using photographs they have taken around the building. Children have the opportunity to work with other adults from the local community; for example, they enjoy visits from a music and movement teacher, have tennis lessons from coaches from a local club and French lessons from a member of staff. Children are beginning to learn skills for the future as they take part in cooking activities, observe and take part in weekly science experiments and set the table for snack time. Throughout the session, children are busy and interested in what is going on; they love dressing-up in a variety of costumes, especially princesses and superheroes, and enjoy creating their own imaginary games, such as pretending to visit the doctor. There are lots of opportunities for children to speak freely, both on a one to one basis and within a large group, with many children confidently able to sing a song or recite a rhyme in front of their peers. Large group times are divided into two age groups, but staff do not consistently organise them to meet the needs of all the children. Children enjoy having stories read to them by adults, and many like to sit and look at books on their own, concentrating intently and handling them appropriately.

Children explore everyday technology as they programme mini robots, use a digital camera to take photographs and use old computer keyboards and telephones at the mark making table. A theme is followed each week and staff plan adult-led activities, such as making beehive mobiles, counting objects and recognising numerals from one to five. Staff are clear about the aims of the activity and make observations of children's achievements that are used by their key person to establish their next steps. Staff spend time talking to parents to learn all they can about their child before they start at the setting. Children and parents attend two open days to familiarise themselves with staff and the pre-school environment, and parents complete a questionnaire to establish starting points for learning. Staff operate a key person system that ensures children and parents feel settled and secure. Staff provide verbal feedback and complete a communication book that includes children's forthcoming targets for learning. Parents are welcome to discuss these with staff at any time, but they are formally invited to attend a session where they can spend time with their child in the setting, before having a meeting with the key person.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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