

Alpha Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique reference number | 219921 |
| Inspection date | 21/06/2011 |
| Inspector | Dianne Sadler |

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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

Alpha Pre-School is a committee run group and has been registered for approximately 40 years. It operates from the adult school premises in Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. Children have access to a main group room, toilet facilities and a safe and secure outdoor play area. The setting serves the local community.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 64 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is open five mornings and three afternoons a week during school term time. Morning sessions run from 8.45am to 11.45am, Monday to Friday; afternoon sessions from 12:30pm to 3pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Children attend a variety of sessions each week.

The pre-school employs four permanent members of child care staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager holds a level four qualification, one member of staff holds a level three qualification and two other staff hold a level two qualification and are working towards a level three. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in this friendly and relaxed village pre-school. Strong partnerships are promoted with parents and relationships with other providers are being developed. This ensures children's individual care and learning needs are known and met appropriately. The staff team have a clear vision for the pre-school and have implemented satisfactory systems to evaluate and monitor their practice. Most policies, procedures and documentation for the efficient running of the pre-school are in place. However, one welfare requirement has not been met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure the record of risk assessment details when and by whom the identified aspects within the environment have been checked (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

04/07/2011

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

- ensure decisions with regards to staff suitability is based on evidence from; references, full employment history, interviews, identity checks and any other checks undertaken, for example medical suitability
- improve the use of observations and assessments to show the progress children are making as they enter the setting towards all the early learning goals and identify their learning priorities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded sufficiently well. Staff have an appropriate knowledge of the possible signs of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. The setting is seeking to update all staff's knowledge in this area through further training. The setting's recruitment and vetting procedure is sufficient but lacks detail. The setting demonstrates that Criminal Record Bureau checks and information with regards to staff qualifications are obtained. However, the setting does not keep a record for every member of staff with regards to; interviews undertaken, medical checks, references and employment history. Children use premises that are safe and secure and they are supervised well at all times. Daily safety checks are completed by staff and recorded. In addition, a written risk assessment details all hazards identified within the environment and on outings and how they are minimised. However, it does not detail who carried out the checks. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement.

The manager and staff are working closely together to evaluate their provision and they have identified a number of areas for further development. For example, they plan to; continue the development of the outdoor play area and provide cover for shade, purchase additional resources to be used outdoors, such as, crawl nets and skipping ropes and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of promoting children's language. However, the setting has failed to identify some areas for improvement within their documentation and with regards to assessing children's learning.

Resources are well organised. Children use an interesting range of good quality play resources which are stored in low level units so that children can self-select. Many resources and activities provided enable children to learn about the wider world. For instance, children benefit from discussing world disasters, such as, the earthquake in Haiti. At circle time they discuss and learn what an earthquake is and what children and their families in Haiti have lost. This helps them to understand and respect the needs of others. In addition, they are learning to care for people in their own community. For example, with support from parents, they bring food items into the setting from home and present elders within their community a food hamper at harvest festival time.

Parents receive good quality information about the provision. They benefit from receiving a booklet detailing the setting and the Early Years Foundation Stage and are invited to attend open days and parents evenings. Parents are encouraged to

share information about their children when they first attend and on an ongoing basis. For example, 'About me sheets' are completed detailing children's interests, likes and dislikes. In addition, parents are encouraged to read and make comments in their children's 'Learning Journal' and inform staff of achievements observed at home. The views of parents are sought through annual questionnaires and valued. On the whole comments are very positive. Parents feel the pre-school is well-managed, with caring and supportive staff that provide a wide range of activities. The setting gives consideration to all suggestions made and demonstrates that some practice has been changed as a result. For example, the setting intends to plan a parents evening in September 2011 with new parents as a result of some existing parents stating that they did not fully understand the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting is also developing positive relationships with other providers. For instance, they send letters to other pre-school settings in which some children also attend, encouraging a two-way flow of information with regards children's welfare and learning.

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

Children learn about possible dangers and how to keep themselves safe through daily routines and planned experiences. For instance, children regularly practice the emergency evacuation procedures and discuss with staff the safe use of scissors during activities. Children are also developing a good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy free access to the outdoor play area throughout the session in which they obtain fresh air and exercise and extend their learning. For instance, they enjoy developing their physical skills and imagination when pushing baby dolls in their pushchairs and riding wheeled toys. They also benefit from watching flowers grow that they have planted in pots. Children enjoy a sociable snack-time in which they develop their independence and make good choices. They confidently identify their name on a tick list and wash their hands before sitting down with others at a table. They help themselves to drinks chosen by their parents and carefully spread butter onto crackers. They also benefit from selecting from a variety of fruits such as grapes and bananas.

Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Systems to observe, assess and plan for children's learning are being established. Each child has a Learning Journal and their progress is recorded using text and photographs. However, staff are not assessing the progress children are making from when they enter the setting towards all the early learning goals. In addition, clearly identified next steps in learning for different curriculum areas are not consistently in place. Consequently, children's progress towards the early learning goals is not maximised.

Children enjoy their time in the setting and are developing the skills needed for the future. They benefit from some activities planned by staff based on their interests and plenty of opportunities to initiate their own play. For example, children enjoy activities and resources reflecting Pirates after some children had previously shown an interest for collecting treasure. They develop their imagination and enjoy exploring the role play corner set out as a Pirate Island. They use their physical

skills as they enthusiastically hunt for 'treasure' buried in the sand with tools, such as, spades. They become excited as they find shiny pebbles and place them in their treasure boxes. Some children confidently involve unfamiliar adults in their play as they show the inspector their boxes full of coloured gems. They competently use language for communication as they explain that they are 'Going to dig treasure in the sand'. Children develop their writing skills at this time as they make marks on treasure maps indicating where treasure is buried. Other children enjoy walking around the environment taking photos of staff and each other on cameras and hand-held video recorders. Good use is made of the photos as they are made into books. Children enjoy seeing themselves at play which develops their self-esteem and gives them a sense of belonging.

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

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 3 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 3 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 3 |
| 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 3 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

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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