

Alconbury Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Deborah Hunt

Setting address	The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Alconbury, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4EQ
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Alconbury Community Pre-School was registered 1980. It operates from The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire and serves the local catchment area and surrounding villages. The setting operates from one room of the building with access to the main hall. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open from 9am to 11.30am with a lunch club from 11.30am to 12.30pm and afternoon sessions from 12.30pm to 3pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. There are currently 30 children on roll all of whom are in the early years age group. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. They are in receipt of funding for nursery education and offer support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children flourish during their time at this welcoming, vibrant setting and make excellent progress in their learning and development through extremely well-considered planning and assessment. Practice is highly inclusive and provides a wonderful environment in which all children actively participate, thoroughly enjoying a stimulating range of activities and learning experiences targeted at meeting their individual interests. Staff have established strong partnerships with parents and carers and built effective partnerships with other agencies and the local school. Accurate self-evaluation demonstrates that the manager and committee know where they envisage the pre-school progressing. Their extensive knowledge supports them in prioritising improvements and as a result they offer a service valued by their local community and tailored to suit individual children and families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing the educational programme for children to enable them to take a more active part in their local community and become more aware of their place within it.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff and manager demonstrate a solicitous and caring approach to safeguarding children in their care. They have a secure understanding of the local safeguarding children board procedures and know how to follow these in order to protect children. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that staff working with the children are suitable to do so. Staff induction is thorough and continuing professional development is given high priority. Staff knowledge and understanding of their roles both individually, and as a team, is excellent. The committee take their role seriously and have recently updated all necessary policies. These, together with the high quality record-keeping and meticulous documentation ensure that consideration of children's safety and well-being is uppermost. Risk assessments are comprehensive and the setting seeks to successfully cover all eventualities.

Inclusive practice is a particular strength of this setting. Staff know individual children and their families very well and parents state they are extremely happy with the care their children receive. Clear supportive strategies are in place to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the best possible progress and enjoy their time at the pre-school. Established integrated working with outside agencies and other professionals further enables the setting to meet children's additional needs superbly. The staff and management team work as a cohesive unit. Their level of enthusiasm and passion for their work is evident and beneficial to the children. The setting has a very friendly, enthusiastic and fun-filled atmosphere and the learning environment is highly stimulating. The room is brightly decorated with lots of children's work and their names and photographs displayed give them a strong sense of belonging. An impressive range of high quality resources are superbly deployed inside and out. These are stored at children's level to enable them to make independent choices in their play. A loft space houses even more resources which are rotated or brought down in support of meeting children's interests.

An excellent relationship with the local school ensures smooth transitions for older children. Effective partnerships also exist with other local settings. This supports consistency for those children attending more than one setting. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Parents share information about children's learning and achievements from home and contribute to their children's learning journeys helping staff gain an in-depth understanding of children's development. Children also take ownership of these folders and are invited to look at them and contribute regularly. Plentiful information is shared between parents and the setting to support consistency and to keep parents well-informed. Parents speak very highly of the setting and staff especially when their children's transitions to school have been smooth.

Comprehensive systems of self-evaluation are in place. Clear action plans are implemented based on the setting's own analysis of priorities for improvement, feedback from parents and children as well as the local authority advisors. There has been a marked improvement in the running of the setting since the last

inspection. For example, the manager has developed staffing which greatly enhances consistency and planning for and assessment of children's progress, which has led to an improved learning experience for children.

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

Staff display an impressive understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and put this into practice as they engage children consistently throughout sessions and help them make superb progress. For example, they extend the telling of a favourite story to go on a 'bear hunt' around the setting and children join in wide-eyed as they tiptoe round searching for the bear. They make wonderful use of numbers and small world monkeys as they sing to help children recognise numbers and relate the animal to the song. Planning is entirely focused around children's interests, along with a number of annual topics, which ensures that children are engrossed and captivated by the activities on offer. Regular observations are undertaken of children's learning and their next steps and interests are identified which further informs planning, ensuring that every opportunity is taken to promote individual learning.

Children feel very safe and secure and relate easily to staff with whom they have fun and form warm and trusting relationships. They display much confidence as they practise songs for their forthcoming Easter production for parents. Children recognise familiar words such as their names. For example, they take their name from the giraffe on the wall before taking their turn at the rolling snack table and place it in the box next to the drinks and fruit. Children's communication skills are very well developed as staff interact continuously with them, listening to them and skilfully responding to their views thereby introducing them to new vocabulary. Numeracy is successfully delivered through everyday activities for example, when staff and children clap their hands and count the age a child has reached as they celebrate their birthday. Children compare the different colour groups of different sized bears and discuss their findings animatedly. They solve simple and more complex problems as they use games which link shapes and complete jigsaws of varying complexity. Children learn about their immediate locality through walks and visitors to the setting. However, they do not often take an active part in their local community which means they are not developing a sense of themselves within it. They gain an appreciation of the wider world, different cultures, languages and beliefs through multicultural displays and when a parent visits with statues and sari's and tells children the story of 'Ganesha' the elephant god during Diwali. Children enjoy trying on historical outfits and the Lord Mayor of London's hat when a visitor who provides the horses for the Lord Mayors Parade comes in to talk to them. Children confidently explore and investigate materials as they feel the velvety softness of the daffodil flowers they have grown and let sand and water run through their fingers. Through play and learning which totally captivates them they are laying secure foundations to support their future economic well-being.

Children's physical development is highly effectively promoted. Much of their play is taken into the outside environment. They are naturally more active in their learning here as they run and use their bodies to 'drive' the push and ride vehicles

and motorcycle trike and negotiate the tyres with care and concentration. Children's individual needs are given the highest consideration. For example, staff risk assess health conditions to ensure they provide the correct care and best support and take note of any food children are offered while with them in case they develop an allergic reaction. Children snuggle up to staff for comfort when upset and to read an impromptu story and enjoy using the cosy dens and quiet spaces provided so they can rest unhindered or spend time alone if they wish. Children love to use the silver pop up tent and understand they must remove their shoes before entering putting them in the box outside. They enjoy using torches and lay on their backs chatting to their friends in the dark. Children's creativity is fantastically well-promoted as they enjoy many opportunities to play instruments, listen to music and dance. They are also offered many art-based activities, such as making their Mother's Day chocolate box and the decorative flower that goes on it, developing their emerging writing skills as they add a message to their Mums on the gift tag.

Children's welfare is also given high priority at this setting. Effective hygiene routines reduce the risk of cross-contamination and children wash their hands without prompting before and after eating and before helping to prepare snacks. Children demonstrate an understanding of how to keep themselves healthy as they cover their mouths when they cough and know that this helps prevent the spread of germs. Snack provision is rotated and is healthy, balanced and nutritious. Children contribute to the provision of snacks through baking and growing vegetables, tomatoes and squash were planted, grown and eaten last summer. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff promote children's confidence and self-esteem wonderfully through their positive comments and the praise they frequently offer in recognition of children's achievements. Children learn about safety through activities, such as recognising and agreeing it is safe to cross the road when out for walks. This is extended into a week-long activity using road safety equipment enabling children to practice these skills and relate them to being a road user.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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