

Alpha Pre-School

Westfield Terrace, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 8BB

Inspection date

27/02/2013

Previous inspection date

21/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children feel safe and secure because the members of staff maintain close supervision during the activities inside and out in the garden.
- Children's independence skills are developing because they register themselves at pre-school when they arrive and they choose when they have their snack, selecting their own food and pouring their own drinks.
- Children enjoy the positive interaction with the staff because they get involved in the play. For example, during activities with books and puppets and singing and dancing sessions.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The partnerships with parents are not yet fully maximised to ensure that information from home about children's interests and achievements are sharply focussed, shared and used to inform the planning of activities.
- There are currently no cosy places with soft furnishings where children can rest or sleep quietly if they need to.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main play room and in the garden.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and with members of the committee.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of the practitioners working with the children and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers who were spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Melanie Eastwell

Full Report

Information about the setting

Alpha Pre-School was registered over 40 years ago and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the adult school premises in Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire and is managed by a committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from

rooms and facilities within the adult school and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs five members of child care staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 3 and 4. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 11.45am and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 12.30pm to 3pm, during term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 54 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- promote an ongoing dialogue or sharing of regular two-way observations about learning with parents and use this shared knowledge and understanding to plan together and think through ideas of how to move the child forward
- enhance the facilities available for children to rest when tired by, for example, providing a cosy area with soft cushions where children can retreat quietly if they need to.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are making good progress in their learning and development. The members of staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and they work well as a team to implement this for each of the children attending. Children are learning to be confident and independent. They are familiar with the daily routines and know what comes next. For example, some children are aware of when the table is cleared in readiness for snack time. They help the staff and announce clearly to their friends and to any visitors that it is time for something to eat and drink. Children are encouraged to choose their own activities and to move around freely. They are confident to look on the low-level units to choose the items they want to explore. They also understand the importance of putting things away again when they have finished playing. Children are confident to ask the staff for different activities. For example, a small group request some songs on the CD player. The member of staff puts the music on and supervises them in a singing and dancing activity. This active support to encourage children's personal, social and emotional development, promotes each child's progress towards the early learning goals.

Children's interest in books is actively promoted because the staff are skilful in their use of props, such as puppets in the book corner. The children become completely engaged in a story because the member of staff uses a monkey puppet. The children laugh and try to help the puppet put his spectacles on so he can see what he is reading. They point out familiar images in the pictures to the monkey who goes on to express his gratitude for their help. This active engagement encourages children to stay in this area and look at more books. The staff plan some adult-led activities that are linked to topics, such as 'sight, hearing and touch'. They plan experiences for the children across the different areas of learning that promote children's interest. For example, they have access to a range of different types of spectacles. They try them on and use them in different areas of the room, such as the book area. Children enjoy exploring a range of small, transparent, sealed boxes that contain a variety of different items, including small footballs, dried pulses and sequins. The staff encourage the children to shake these and to listen to the different tones of sound that are produced. Children also enjoy making their own shakers that they put to most effective use during a singing and music session.

The staff sit with the children during their activities, they understand how to ask them questions that contribute to their ongoing interest and that promotes their language development. They also take note of what the children do in their spontaneous play to inform the planning of activities. For example, a group of children are seen to use some small mats as hats, draping them over their heads. To continue the ongoing celebrations of Chinese New Year the key person suggests that they make 'coolie' hats. The staff talk to the children about the hats and the reasons why they are worn in China. This working alongside children's interests actively promotes their learning. Each child's progress is monitored through effective observation procedures. Their key person observes them during their play and uses the information gathered alongside 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' to identify appropriate next steps for them. This information also contributes to the Progress check at age two when appropriate. Parents are mostly involved in their children's learning which ensures that their preparation for school is well-supported. They are asked to provide information before their child starts attending about their family and their interests. Parents are welcomed into the setting during arrival and departure times so they can see the environment and the displays of their children's work. However, the partnership working with parents has not been fully maximised to promote an ongoing dialogue and sharing of information to work together to fully inform planning and to share ideas about how to progress children.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children clearly demonstrate that they feel safe and secure at this setting. They separate from their parents when they arrive and quickly settle to play. The key person works closely, on an individual basis with their parents, to help them settle in. Children show a secure bond with the members of staff. For example, they are confident to initiate conversations and they approach them for comfort and reassurance as they need it. Parents provide information about their child's care needs and these are managed by the staff. Children are supported in their transition between the pre-school and other providers

of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through also involving parents, the staff share information about current topics and the children's interests with the other provider to promote a consistent approach for the children. Children behave well because they understand the expectations and routines. The staff act as positive role models through speaking to children on their level and explaining why certain behaviour is unacceptable. The children are involved in safe risk-taking which helps them to learn about managing their own safety. For example, the staff talk to them about being careful when running around in the outside area and to avoid the muddy patches because they may be slippery.

Children have plenty of opportunities for fresh air through outdoor activities. For example, they go for walks and outings around the local area and they use the enclosed garden for a wide range of activities, such as hoops, bats and balls, bikes, ride on toys and organised games. The staff take an active role in these games and they talk to the children about the weather. For example, the sun is shining but it still feels cold. Some children become tired towards the end of the session. They snuggle into a member of staff for a cuddle and fall asleep on their lap. However, there are no soft furnishings upon which to lay children down which means they cannot enjoy undisturbed rest. Children are provided with healthy choices for food and drink at snack times. Parents are asked to provide details about any allergies or health needs and these are managed effectively by the staff. Children are independent in the toilet areas and they are learning about managing their own personal hygiene through discussion with and good role modelling by the staff. For example, during snack time the member of staff supervising wears gloves to prepare the food. They explain to the children the reason for this is to prevent the spread of any germs.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee, management and staff team work well together to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the benefit of the children. The staff team fully understand their responsibility to meet the learning and development requirements for each of the children in their care. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to implement this successfully because the children are making good progress. The mostly effective partnerships with parents and with other providers supports children to have a smooth transition. The staff show a good understanding of how to maintain the safeguarding and welfare requirements and children's safety is given high priority. Effective procedures ensure that risks to children are identified and reduced. For example, the entrance door is closely monitored by two members of staff during arrival and departure times and the risk assessment documents are updated and reviewed as required.

The staff are familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and of how to implement these in the event of any child protection concerns. There are robust procedures for the recruitment and retention of suitable members of staff. They have opportunities to keep their knowledge up-to-date through attending training workshops and courses. They have regular meetings where all staff members are involved in the planning of activities for the children as well as the pre-school's self-evaluation. All staff are given the opportunity to put forward any ideas and suggestions and the effective team

working has had a positive impact on improving their practice. The pre-school has taken positive action on the action and recommendations made at the previous inspection and they have responded to the changes of the revised Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. They demonstrate a positive attitude to continuous improvement and they have identified some well-targeted plans for the future.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219921
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	818153
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	54
Name of provider	Alpha Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	21/06/2011
Telephone number	07966 512389

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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