

Alpha Kindergarten School

66 Fletton Avenue, Peterborough, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, PE2 8AU

Inspection date	03/04/2013
Previous inspection date	30/07/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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 enjoy a stimulating environment where they are eager to play, explore and make friends. As a result, they make good progress with their learning and development.
- Staff have a good understanding of how children learn through play. Consequently, activities are exciting and planned around each child's interests.
- Staff value the strong partnerships with parents and carers. Daily discussions and a range of ways to share information are used effectively to ensure there is a coordinated approach to supporting children.
- The key person system is good. As a result, children form strong attachments with staff and are generally happy and confident when at nursery.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Occasionally, opportunities for children to be more independent at meal times are missed. As a result children's learning and development is not maximised.
- Although well-resourced, not all role play areas reflect articles from everyday life. Consequently, children's imaginative play is not fully enhanced.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 throughout the nursery and in the gardens.
- The inspector held a meeting with managers and spoke with children and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took the views of parents and carers into account.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journals, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.

Inspector

Jacqueline Baker

Full Report

Information about the setting

Alpha Kindergarten School is one of two privately owned settings run by Alpha School Kindergarten Limited, both of which are located in Peterborough. It originally opened in March 2001 and transferred to its current ownership in June 2004. The nursery operates from a two-storey building located in Fletton, close to Peterborough city centre. It serves families from both the local area and from further afield.

The nursery operates five days a week from 8am until 6pm, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 124 children on roll who are all in the early years age range, some in part-time places. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. The nursery supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 22 members of staff. Most staff hold an early years qualification to Level 2 or 3. One member of staff holds a Level 6 qualification and two staff have completed qualifications at Level 5. The manager is working towards Early Years Professional status. The nursery receives support from the local authority and is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance children's opportunities for imaginary play by; providing a variety of familiar resources reflecting everyday life, such as magazines, real kitchen items, telephones or washing materials
- maximise opportunities for children to develop good independence skills at mealtimes by; allowing children to pour their own drinks and serve their own food.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are busy, active learners who have fun whilst following their own interests. This is because staff have a good understanding of how children learn through play and provide a

well-resourced, stimulating environment that meets children's needs well. For example, children work well together as they make constructions from interconnecting rods and connectors. They fathom out how and where to link parts together and discuss what shape their construction will finally be. Their activity not only demonstrates good levels of concentration but also shows how children can think critically and creatively in order that they successfully complete their task. Staff support learning further by skilfully questioning and re-shaping the activity. As a result, children decide to use a digital camera to capture their work and celebrate their achievement.

Children's communication skills are fostered well by staff who understand the importance of children being able to convey their wants and needs. For example, staff repeat babies simple utterances during play and routines. This not only delights babies but also boosts their self-esteem and encourages them to practice their new skill further. Staff also use communication systems, sign language and gestures to support children's verbal skills. This is especially effective for those children learning English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, children make good progress and communicate well. Opportunities for children to enhance and develop their literacy skills are good. An environment rich in meaningful text and a self-registration procedure means they are beginning to learn that words carry meaning. The well-resourced libraries effectively support children's learning and as a result children choose to sit, totally absorbed in books. Children's creativity is fostered well through availability of a range of materials such as paint, dough and sand. However, opportunities to explore imaginary worlds are less well developed. For example, although well-resourced, there are limited resources reflecting everyday life in some role play areas. This means that children's learning through imaginary play is not maximised.

Parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and learning. Staff also encourage parents and carers to make comments in learning journeys about their child's activities and achievements at home. Staff complete regular and precise assessments of children's learning, including a progress check at age two. They use this information effectively to plan stimulating and challenging experiences. Consequently, children are making good progress and are well prepared for their next stage in learning, including school.

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

The well-established key person system is successful in promoting children's well-being and enables them to form secure attachments to both staff and their friends. Staff develop strong partnerships with parents and carers and this enables them to gain a good understanding of individual care needs. As a result, children are confident to move around the nursery freely, following their own interests. They return to staff for a cuddle if they need help or reassurance and this further demonstrates their feeling of security. Behaviour is good because staff offer sensitive and timely support when necessary. For example, they offer good explanations about why children should not take toys away from others. Consequently, children are learning about what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour.

Children take full advantage of the free flow of activities to the outside areas. They enjoy riding bikes, playing with balls and learning how to take risks by using the slide or walking along a balance beam with the help and encouragement of staff. This means that children are learning about the importance of physical exercise in a healthy lifestyle. Nutritious meals and snacks effectively support children's understanding of a healthy diet. Although children's independence is encouraged, this is not always maximised throughout the nursery during mealtimes. There is scope to improve this, for example, by serving children's food at their tables and supporting them to eventually help themselves.

Staff provide a welcoming, well-resourced environment that stimulates children to investigate and actively learn through play. This has a positive effect on children's emotional well-being and all-round development. Careful preparations and support for children during transitions further demonstrate a commitment to children's welfare and ensures that every child has a positive and happy early years experience.

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

Leadership and management is good and there is a secure knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Self-evaluation has been fully implemented and captures the views of staff, children, parents and carers. Areas of strength have been identified and targets for improvements clearly support children's achievements over time. Monitoring of planning and assessment is effective and ensures that the progress of all children is understood and any interventions to support progress are well targeted and have the maximum impact. Educational programmes are scrutinised and as a result children benefit from a broad range of experiences that supports their positive progress towards the early learning goals.

Recruitment procedures are thorough and together with background checks, good performance management procedures and team meetings, mean that staff remain suitable for their role. Staff are keen to improve their skills and knowledge and where possible attend training which they subsequently cascade to colleagues. The availability of professional journals and information sheets prepared by managers further enhances their skills and means that children benefit from current childcare practice.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding. They know how to identify and report concerns they may have about a child in their care. Effective policies and procedures support their work and help to ensure that children remain as safe as possible when at nursery. Partnerships with external agencies and other providers are good and this means that children benefit from a coordinated approach to their care and development and as a result, make good progress. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Daily discussions, information evenings and daily diaries all contribute well to this effective partnership and benefit all children. Parents and carers offer positive feedback about the nursery and especially appreciate how managers and staff value their comments and suggestions and promptly respond to any concerns they may have. They also comment on how their children enjoy and look forward to coming to nursery where they make good

progress with their communication and social and emotional development.

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 action. 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	EY284159
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	908853
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	113
Number of children on roll	124
Name of provider	Alpha Big Sky Limited
Date of previous inspection	30/07/2009
Telephone number	01733 311080

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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