

Alston Pre-School Playgroup

Alston Town Hall, Front Street, ALSTON, CA9 3RF

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

03/04/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff listen to children and follow their interests, therefore they plan well thought out activities, which build on individual children's learning so that they make good progress, in relation to their starting points.
- The well-embedded key person system helps all children to form secure emotional attachments as staff skilfully support them in their play and learning. Consequently, children are very well prepared for their transition, both into the pre-school and on to school.
- Children are protected and kept safe from harm because the staff team understand and effectively meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- Children flourish in this welcoming and happy nursery. They show high levels of confidence, behave well and are motivated to learn because staff make good use of time and space so that children benefit from a broad range of interesting activities that reflect all areas of learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for extending the children's already good self-help skills have not been fully incorporated into their daily routines, such as at meal times.
- Opportunities for children to use technology are not as well supported in the range of resources provided.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children playing in the pre-school playroom, the soft play area and the outdoor play area.
- The inspector held discussions with joint managers, the additional staff member and the children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with one of the joint managers.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with one of the joint managers.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents of the early years children attending the setting who were spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, the planning documentation and the systems for the monitoring of children's progress.

Inspector

Carys Millican

Full report

Information about the setting

Alston Pre-School Playgroup was established in 1997 and re-registered in 2013 as a limited company. It operates from a self-contained playroom within Alston Town Hall in Cumbria. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It opens five days a week from 8.30am to 11.30am and from 12 noon to 3pm during term time only. A lunch club is available in-between the two sessions. Children also have access to a playroom on the ground floor and the hall on the first floor. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 20 children in the early years age range on roll. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children.

There are currently three staff employed at the setting who all hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the organisation of routines, such as at meal times, to incorporate opportunities to enable children to practise and develop their self-help skills even further, for example, by helping to prepare their snack, and collect, empty and wash their cups and plates, so that they can be even more self-sufficient in readiness for school
- enhance children's use of, and the range of information and communication technology resources that are used in the home and in schools, by making sure that they are made available and working.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is good in this well-established rural pre-school setting. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop. They are actively involved in children's play and they skilfully ask open-ended questions to encourage children to problem solve by thinking for themselves. For example, when children decide to make flags the staff encourage the children to work out what they will use and how they will make them. When their idea does not work, staff ask them to think about why and what

else they could use. As a result, the staffs' effective teaching approach encourages children to become active learners, who learn to explore different ways to solve the problem. For example, the children decide to use sticking tape rather than glue when it does not stick their flag to the pipe cleaner. The observation, planning and assessment arrangements fully contribute to supporting children in making good progress from their initial starting points and prepares them well for future moves on to school. For example, through observations and continuous interaction with the children, the staff follow their new interests and note down their current achievements. The staff effectively incorporate this information into the planning of activities to support children's next steps in their learning. In addition, staff regularly complete a 'summary progress' sheet to ensure that they capture a good overview of children's progress. This means the staff have a good understanding of each child's individual stage of development. Staff share this information with parents through their child's progress record and encourage parents to provide them with additional information about what their children do at home so a more complete picture is seen. Staff know all the children very well, not just their key children, and during activities they make sure that all children are involved and supported.

The learning environment is very calm, relaxed, welcoming and stimulating. Through staffs' planning and continuous provision, they ensure children experience numerous play opportunities and interesting activities across all areas of learning. This clearly contributes to supporting children in making good progress in their learning and development. Children have free and independent access to a wide selection of play resources. As a result, children enthusiastically engage in their play because they make their own choices about what they do, and the activities reflect their emerging interests. Staff skilfully support children's communication and language development by constantly talking to them and engaging them in activities, such as singing and storytelling. Children are confident talkers and introduce their own ideas and thoughts into activities. For example, when using the song bag the children decide that they would like to use real pennies and the toy buns to support their chosen action song. The staff fully encourage the children to do this and as a result, children become creative and critical thinkers. Staff repeat words and provide narratives in children's play. Therefore, children are confident speakers and they engage easily in conversations with their peers, staff members and visitors. Staff listen to children and provide the time for them to talk about their own experiences without being rushed and to talk about what they are doing or reflect on or explain events. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered. Children enjoy looking at books and engage in a good range of activities that promote their early writing skills and literacy development. For example, children use their name cards to practise writing their name and begin to recognise the letters in their friends' names when asked by staff. Children are making good progress in their mathematical development. They explore number in everyday routines and activities, they count in their play and when designing their models, they discuss colour, shape and size. Staff effectively foster children's development under expressive arts and design. This is because all children have good opportunities to use their imagination through role play and engage in a wide range of art and craft activities. Children are provided with a range of resources which are to enable them to learn how things work and linked to information and communication technology. However, not all these technological and programmable toys work or are switched on so that children can use them. For example, the computer station is accessible but not made available and there are no working batteries in some

programmable toys.

Staff fully understand the importance of working in partnership with parents. Through the documentation provided when parents first register their child and the additional materials displayed on the noticeboard, they receive good information about the care and education in place for their children. Staff regularly share and discuss children's individual progress and parents are able to access their child's progress records at any time. Furthermore, they use a 'wow' comments board and interest sheet, as a way to encourage parents to share what their children do at home and remain interested in. This contributes to the planning and the continuing gathering of valuable information about what children do at home to support their learning. Staff work closely with parents when there are any emerging concerns about a child's progress or if children have identified special educational needs and/or a disabilities. This means they share information and work together to agree individual learning plans which ensure that all learning is targeted and tailored to meet each child's specific needs.

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

The well-embedded key person system established in the pre-school helps all children to form secure emotional attachments and a strong bond with all the staff. This is because they skilfully support them in their play and learning and have well-planned settling-in visits into pre-school and when they are ready for school. The pre-school ensures that children are well supported when they first start by encouraging regular visits with parents and then on their own. This gives the children the opportunity to become familiar with the environment and routine and build up a secure relationship with their key person. Consequently, their emotional well-being is fostered, and children are eager to come into the setting, separate with ease from parents and settle quickly into the pre-school routine. Parents are actively engaged in preparing the children for the changes ahead and they are provided with information and guidance about the Early Years Foundation Stage by the pre-school staff. Information is gathered from parents which is used to help plan for children's individual care and learning needs. Staff complete home visits which allows them to gain an even more secure familiarity with the children's current needs, interests and family backgrounds. Strong systems are also in place for working with the local school. Teachers are invited into the pre-school as one of the ways children are supported as they prepare to start formal education. The staff take time to talk to the teachers and share with them the reports and summaries of how children are progressing. After the Easter break children and staff visit the local school and spend time meeting the new teachers, playing in the new classroom and playground and have their lunch in the school dining room. Consequently, the children are supported well in readiness for their change in routines and environment, and by doing so, this promotes their sense of safety and fosters their emotional well-being. Children are confident and self-assured. They delight in talking to visitors about what they are playing with and encouraging them to join in their play.

Staffs' high expectations mean children are developing the skills for independence and school readiness. They eagerly help to dress and undress themselves when preparing to go outdoors or to the soft play, and staff consult parents regarding supporting children

with their toilet training. However, opportunities for extending the children's already very good self-help skills have not been fully incorporated into all daily routines, such as preparing snacks, setting the tables with plates, serving themselves and clearing away at meal times. Staff support the children very well to develop a healthy lifestyle. Meals and snacks are freshly prepared and children are provided with a wide variety of fruit, vegetables, dairy products and cereals. Children access drinks of water throughout the day from the water containers fetched from home. Staff encourage parents to provide a healthy packed lunch meal. These are stored appropriately until required. Staff talk to children about good hygiene procedures and posters in the bathroom support children's understanding of preventing germs through hand washing. Children routinely do this before snack time and before they have their lunch.

Children enjoy being physically active. They enjoy opportunities to access the soft play resources in the hall above the pre-school rooms and play outside in the fully enclosed play area. Staff ensure that children have a chance to rest as well as exercise to meet their needs during the day. Children have resources to build with, climb on, balance, push and pedal around while outdoors. They enjoy sensory play with sand and the recently constructed water wall outside. They fill containers and watch the water flow down pipes and tubes and back to the container again. Staff help children develop a sense of their own safety. They ask the children what they must and must not do when going up to the soft play and children respond by telling the visitors that they must hold on tight to the bannister on the left hand side of the stairs and must not overtake each other or push or shove, as they may fall. They remind the children to count how many of them are going upstairs and during circle time activities check that everyone is attending. This helps the children develop their sense of the well-being of others and themselves. Children's safety is further reinforced as they are taught how to go up and down the steps to access the bathroom and through regular practising of fire drills. This ensures children are aware of the evacuation procedure and how to stay safe at the pre-school. Staff provide a relaxed and calm atmosphere in the pre-school. They are good role models and are very clear, calm and polite in their interactions with the children, parents and each other. They provide children with a positive role model to which children are respond to very well. For example, the staff explain that the routine of the day will be different today because the new children and their parents are coming to visit and they are to make them feel welcome. The staff tell the children the names of the children coming to see them and how they have never been to the pre-school, so they do not know how nice it is. As a result, the children welcome the new starters with open arms, introduce themselves and their friends, and confidently take them to show them the resources. Children learn to share and take turns. They are very polite and courteous towards their friends, staff and visitors. Children are well behaved and staff help children to manage their feelings and behaviour very well. Comfort objects, such as soft toy animals have their own self-registration name card and staff encourage the children to hold their toy at circle time and interact with them. Staff help children to learn about their community and to understand about difference and diversity in the world around them. They visit places of interest, for example, a residential home for the elderly and the local church. They celebrate cultural events and celebrations throughout the year, for example, Chinese New Year and the local community events. Children learn about the different festivals, sample food and complete associated craft activities. Dressing-up clothes further support this and the use of

additional visual images help children become even more aware of the diverse nature of the society in which they live.

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

The staff team have a good understanding of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good systems are in place and procedures are implemented and understood to help safeguard and protect children from harm. All staff have completed the local authority safeguarding training and as a result, they know exactly what steps to take should they have any concerns about children in their care. Children's welfare is further safeguarded through the use of the required documentation. Staff keep accurate records of attendance for children, staff and visitors, along with records of any accidents or medication administered while at the pre-school. Written procedures are in place with regards to recruitment, vetting and induction of staff, to check they are suitable and remain suitable to work with children. Both managers work together to monitor the delivery of the educational programmes. They know the children well and track all the children's progress to identify any gaps in children's learning. Regular staff appraisals are completed for all staff members and continuous professional development is promoted. The staff team complete regular reviews of the setting. They evaluate the strengths of the pre-school and they continue to identify where they can enhance the provision and make further improvements in this already good setting.

Staff help children to learn how to keep themselves safe and ensure that the environment they play in continues to keep them safe and secure. Thorough risk assessments are completed relating to the use of the premises and all activities and outings that the children participate in. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and closely supervise them at all times. The pre-school maintains high adult-to-child ratios to support the ongoing care and welfare of children. All the policies and procedures required for the continued smooth running of the pre-school are effectively implemented and the views of users are respected and valued to add to the further improvement of the setting.

Partnerships with parents are good. Staff make sure that all parents are made to feel welcome in the pre-school. They work closely with parents and other professionals at times when children require additional help. Staff provide daily feedback on all the children's activities and events of the day and share this information with parents at collection times. Staff provide parents with a welcome pack with information about the pre-school, which includes the educational programme and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents spoken to during the inspection stated that they are very happy with the quality of the service and their children love attending. They feel that staff are very approachable and supportive and they feel involved in their children's development. Parents comment that they enjoy talking to the staff about their children's progress and receive a wealth of information about continuing to help their children at home. The pre-school staff understand the importance of working closely with other professionals and have good relationships established with the health visitors and the local authority advisers. The pre-school has close links with local primary schools, which aids a

smooth transition for children when leaving the pre-school. Overall the pre-school shows a strong capacity to improve the service they provide for the local and rural community.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY471864
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	941374
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	12
Number of children on roll	20
Name of provider	Alston Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07734929123

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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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