

# Aston Pre-School

Aston Village Hall, ASTON, Hertfordshire, SG2 7ED

## Inspection date

22/10/2014

Previous inspection date

04/12/2009

## 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

- Practitioners attend additional training and have a thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their strong teaching techniques mean that they assess children's learning and development well and plan stimulating activities that support them in making good progress.
- Practitioners and the management committee work well together. They conscientiously evaluate activities, safeguarding procedures and daily practice. As a result, they promote children's safety, welfare and development well.
- Children eagerly participate, enjoying well-planned daily play opportunities that reflect their current interests. They develop positive attitudes to play and learning that prepare them well for school.
- Practitioners work with parents to obtain initial information about the children. They understand children's needs and offer them pertinent support and reassurance. This aids children in settling and they develop secure relationships with practitioners.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Practitioners do not always use parents' updates about their children's progress at home frequently enough in order to enrich the activity planning.
- Practitioners do not always promote children's learning to the maximum by consistently exchanging detailed information with other providers caring for the children.

## 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 in the main room and the outside area.  
The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and the chair person
- and vice chairperson of the management committee. She carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked with children and looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.  
The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners
- working with children, suitability of committee members, the provider's self-evaluation information and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

## Inspector

Kelly Eyre

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Aston Pre-School was registered in 1983 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a village hall in Aston, near Stevenage, Hertfordshire. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one main room and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There are currently six staff working directly with the children, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm and from 12.15pm to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and from 9.15am to 12.15pm on Thursday and Friday. There is a lunch club that runs on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 12.15pm to 1.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 24 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It receives support from the local authority.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the activity planning by making more frequent use of updates from parents about their children's learning and development at home
- extend the partnership working with other providers caring for the children, for example, through the consistent exchange of assessment and planning information, as well as day to day information, to fully complement children's all-round learning and development.

## Inspection judgements

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

Practitioners have a confident knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, using purposeful teaching techniques to support children in making good progress. Key persons work with parents to obtain information about their children. They share this appropriately with other practitioners so that all have a good understanding of each child's needs and interests. This enables them to offer children relevant support and activities. This supports children in being settled and they are happy and eager to play and explore. These positive attitudes are nurtured by practitioners, meaning that children are well prepared for school and future learning. For example, because practitioners know each child well, they quickly recognise their efforts and achievements, offering praise and encouragement. Practitioners efficiently assess their initial information from parents so that they have a good

understanding of children's starting points and of their subsequent progress. They observe children as they play, keeping clear records of their progress and any current interests. They use this information to inform the planning of children's next steps in learning, carefully feeding these into the daily planning. This means that they consistently offer children a wide variety of resources and activities that interest them and promote their learning. There are effective procedures in place for carrying out the progress check for children aged between two and three years. These checks are carried out by the key person for each child and support them in planning further activities and highlighting any areas where children may require additional support. Practitioners' generally good communication with parents means that parents have opportunities to share some updates about their children. For example, they meet each term with their child's key person in order to discuss their progress. However, the current system does not always allow for sharing any progress made in between these meetings. This means that practitioners do not include this extended range of information in their planning in order to promote children's development to the maximum. Parents receive regular electronic messages from the setting that detail the current activity planning and include information about extending the activities at home. In this way, the setting supports parents well in extending their children's learning in the home environment.

Practitioners support children well in developing the skills required for their successful future learning. Their thoughtful provision of resources and good interaction encourage children to explore, experiment and use their new knowledge. For example, children playing outside explore a large box of musical instruments. They find a triangle and a practitioner helps them to experiment with different beaters. They decide that the metal beater sounds best. The children then continue to explore independently and when they find a drum, they experiment again with different beaters in order to find the best one. Children are motivated and interested in the activities as practitioners base these on their current interests. For example, after noting children's interest in dinosaurs, practitioners offer a range of associated activities. Children use their creativity and imagination as they make dinosaur puppets and experiment by moving like a dinosaur. Their enjoyment of books and their early reading skills are promoted as they read about dinosaurs and act out a favourite dinosaur story. Practitioners' thoughtful planning helps children to gain a realistic understanding of diversity and the wider world. For example, children sample a range of traditional dishes from around the world. They talk about where these originate from and identify the countries on a map, then go on to discuss the climates and traditions of these countries.

Children enjoy choosing resources and the calm environment means that they have opportunities to discuss their play and work together. For example, a group of children work together to make a tall tower using a large construction set. When this looks as though it will fall over, the children work out that some of them can hold it steady while the others add further blocks. Children enjoy a wide range of activities that promote their physical development. They play parachute games and learn to dance and move in time to music. These activities help them to coordinate their movements and become aware of the space around them. Practitioners thoughtfully engage children in discussions that they know will interest them, thereby extending their language and communication skills. For example, during snack time, children talk eagerly about recent events at home and at the pre-school.

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

Practitioners use the key-person system well to support their partnership working with parents. They meet regularly with parents, starting with an induction day before children begin attending the pre-school. This enables practitioners to begin building relationships with parents and their key children and to gain a thorough understanding of each child's needs and preferences. They then use this information when supporting children to settle. For example, they put out children's favourite toys so that they see these as they enter the pre-school, helping them to feel welcome and secure. Children are well supported by practitioners throughout each session. They spend some time in age-related groups. For example, older children enjoy more complex stories and talk about starting school. Children also play in mixed age groups, enabling them to learn from each other and to develop their social and communication skills, thus preparing them for school.

Practitioners' good understanding of each child means that children's needs are sensitively met and they develop secure relationships with their key person and other adults at the pre-school. Practitioners interact well with the children and demonstrate that they genuinely enjoy their company. Children respond to this and naturally include practitioners in their play and discussions, assured that they will understand and be interested. Children are encouraged to make independent choices about their play. Practitioners also note what children are doing and celebrate their efforts and achievements with them. These sensitive practices promote children's independence and build their self-esteem, thus aiding them in developing the positive attitudes that support their learning when they move to school. Practitioners support children well in developing a good understanding of how to manage their behaviour. They talk sensitively to them about this and help them to consider how their actions affect others.

Practitioners' thoughtful consideration of daily practice means that they support children well in developing their self-care skills. For example, children access their drinks throughout the session, carefully checking the labels to make sure they choose the correct one. Practitioners have reviewed their work so that they now support children well in developing a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They talk with children about good hygiene and how to prevent the spread of germs. This is then reinforced through specific activities. For example, a practitioner reads a story about sneezing and the children talk about why it is important to cover their mouths when sneezing. They learn about healthy eating as they participate in discussions and cooking activities. Practitioners make effective use of opportunities to talk with children about the effects of exercise. For example, after running about on the playing field, children note their raised heart rates, talk about feeling hot and discuss why it is important to drink plenty of water. Ongoing discussions and clear explanations from practitioners mean that children build a good awareness of safety. For example, they understand why it is important to use the ride-on toys in the designated area so that they do not bump into other children.

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

Practitioners ensure that they promote children's welfare through the consistent implementation of the setting's safeguarding procedures. All practitioners have attended training in this area and demonstrate a good understanding of the process to follow should they have any concerns about children. Some members of the management committee have also attended safeguarding training. This means that they are aware of their responsibilities in this area and ensure that practitioners are supported in promoting children's welfare. There are robust recruitment and checking procedures to ensure that all practitioners are suitable to work with children. All committee members also undergo appropriate suitability checks. Practitioners carry out daily safety checks and regularly review the risk assessments, ensuring that children play in a safe environment. Practitioners and the committee work together to evaluate the daily practice at the setting. This improved evaluation includes feedback from parents and children and gives the management a thorough overview of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information to plan relevant changes that lead to improvements in the provision for children. For example, recent changes include the introduction of more frequent parent and key person sessions. These enable parents and practitioners to work together to promote children's well-being and development.

The manager and management committee set high standards for the pre-school. They use practical procedures to support practitioners in their work. Each practitioner receives regular supervision and is supported in attending further training. This has a positive impact on children. For example, after attending letters and sounds training, practitioners now offer children more opportunities to experiment with sounds and to see letters and words in the environment each day. This supports children in developing their early reading skills. Practitioners and the management committee work well together. Their attendance at training and their good communication with other professionals means that they have a thorough understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They regularly review the setting's policies and procedures, thereby ensuring that they meet all requirements and promote children's health, welfare and development. The manager uses practical procedures to check each child's assessment records in order to review their progress. She also discusses this in regular meetings with key persons. This enables her to identify any areas where further support may be needed. She also uses the information to inform the activity planning so that they respond to any weaker areas of development, such as enabling children to explore the use of a wider range of craft materials.

Practitioners have generally appropriate partnerships with other people involved in caring for the children. They display the week's planning so that childminders and parents can see this. General day-to-day information is exchanged between the setting and other providers. However, the setting does not use these partnerships to the maximum to exchange more detailed and specific assessment information in order to fully complement children's learning and further promote their development. There are currently no children attending the pre-school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the manager and practitioners attend network meetings and briefing sessions at the local children's centre. This gives them a good insight into the support offered by other professionals. Therefore, they understand how to seek additional help for children and their families should the need arise. Practitioners maintain good partnerships with parents

and ensure that they are kept well informed. For example, parents receive weekly electronic messages detailing the planning. Parents report that they like this communication and that they appreciate the kindness and care that practitioners show for each child.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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## 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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146425
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	874905
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of provider</b>	Aston Pre-School Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	04/12/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	07790995175

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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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