

Inspection of Aston Preschool

Aston Village Hall, New Park Lane, Aston, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 7ED

Inspection date: 26 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy coming to this welcoming and friendly pre-school. They happily separate from their parents. They take off their coats and shoes before entering the playroom. All children are very familiar with the pre-school routines and hold out their hands for the hand gel. They understand that they need to do this to keep themselves safe. Staff have children's best interests at the heart of everything they do. They are very good role models and show a great deal of warmth and affection for the children. This helps all children to feel happy, valued and safe. Children confidently approach staff for comfort and reassurance.

All children are motivated and excited to explore the wide range of interesting and exciting activities that staff plan for them. They thoroughly enjoy pretending to go on a trip to the North Pole to see Father Christmas. They use their imaginations as they talk about what they will take with them in their packed lunch boxes. They excitedly tell their friends what they can see out of the aeroplane window. On their journey, children delight in 'meeting' different creatures, such as a seal, a reindeer and an owl. Children have great fun as staff cleverly extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The pre-school is extremely well established in the community. The manager and staff are dedicated and enthusiastic. They are all well qualified, which has a positive impact on children's learning. The manager and committee have regular discussions with the staff. This ensures that they are aware of any pressures of workload affecting their well-being. Staff say they feel very well supported.
- The manager and staff have been very proactive in identifying the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's learning. They skilfully support children's personal, social and emotional development. For example, they help children to share their toys and take turns in their games. Children are encouraged to understand their emotions. Staff provide picture cards to help them to describe how they feel.
- Staff consistently talk to the children and show a genuine interest in what they say. They use questions successfully to extend children's thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, they ask children why they need warm clothes to go to the North Pole. They encourage children to contribute to stories and songs by using story bags and props. When children are ready, staff support them in learning letter names and sounds in preparation for early reading.
- Children develop their small-muscle skills in preparation for their early writing. For example, they use tweezers to pick up small items. They confidently use tools and their hands to mould play dough into different shapes. They carefully thread pipe cleaners round fir cones to make sparkly decorations to hang on

their Christmas trees at home.

- There are many opportunities for children to develop their understanding of mathematics. They learn about numbers, colours and shapes during their daily routines. For example, during group activities, children are keen to identify familiar shapes. They count how many sides and corners they have. Children proudly explain that the rectangle has two long sides and two short sides.
- Children enjoy exploring the natural environment during their walks in the community. They thoroughly enjoy visiting the allotments nearby. Local gardeners tell them about the vegetables they are growing. They show them the different tools they use. Children observe the plants growing and changing over time.
- Parents describe the friendliness of the staff team and how happy their children are to attend. They especially value the online system of sharing information. Through this, staff give parents the opportunity to be actively involved in their children's learning. Parents also appreciate the suggestions they receive to support their children's learning at home.
- When children begin attending, staff gain a good range of information from parents about their children's care routines. This helps children to settle quickly and happily into the pre-school. However, staff do not find out as much as they can about what the children already know and can do before they start, to enable them to plan thoroughly and build on their learning right from the beginning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and committee carry out rigorous vetting and induction procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. All staff have completed relevant training and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. This includes the wider aspects of safeguarding issues, such as children being exposed to extreme views and behaviours. The manager implements a range of records, documents and policies that help to safeguard children. For example, staff follow comprehensive procedures when they record accidents and medication.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- gather more detailed information about the skills and abilities children already have when they first start at pre-school, and use this information to plan challenging activities from the beginning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY559467
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10190746
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Aston Preschool (CIO)
Registered person unique reference number	RP559466
Telephone number	07790995175
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Aston Preschool registered in 2018. The setting employs four members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting is open from 9.15am until 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 9.15am until 12.15pm on Thursday, during term time only. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqui Oliver

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager showed the inspector around the areas that children access. They discussed how staff organise the setting and plan the curriculum and experiences for children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the pre-school's documents. This included evidence about staff suitability and training.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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