

# Inspection of Apsley Lock Pre School

BLRA Community Room, Unit 4 Evens Wharf, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead,  
Hertfordshire HP3 9WU

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Inspection date: 19 October 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children are enthusiastic to join in with learning where they have opportunities to extend their communication and language skills, including through songs at circle time, such as the 'hello song'. Staff encourage children through positive interactions to confidently describe what they see, using rich language and vocabulary. The children have rich experiences exploring outdoors, where they confidently find out about understanding the world around them.

Children have positive relationships with staff, who encourage them to explore tools, such as pipettes, to further develop their fine motor skills, experimenting with liquids and sensory play. Children have opportunities to talk about the colours they see, where staff encourage them to extend their learning further by having a go.

Children play cooperatively with one another and show curiosity, where they develop their own ideas and create pieces of art. They take part in adventurous walks and collect leaves and sticks. Staff extend children's experiences through investigations of berries, spiderwebs and pumpkins, talking about what they see. Children feel safe and secure; they are confident to separate from their parents when they arrive at pre-school.

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

- Staff develop children's communication and language skills through rich interactions and play. For example, they encourage children to actively take part in songs and reading. Staff have been developing and extending the reading corner to support early intervention for children's speech and language. This gives children good opportunities to extend their vocabulary and enhance their interest in books.
- The manager has a positive impact on the pre-school and creates effective links between parents and the community. She supports transitions to school and actively helps children and parents to be prepared for children's move on to their next stage of learning. The manager also incorporates parents' views and ideas to where links can be made to home learning. For example, parents feel it is important to further explore their heritage and where they come from. The manager supports this effectively in the pre-school.
- Staff implement a well-thought-out curriculum to support children's learning. However, they do not always consider children's individual learning needs. For example, they focus on all children learning colours rather than building precisely on what each child already knows and can do.
- Parents are aware that if they have concerns, they can discuss them with the manager. They feel supported as their children settle into pre-school and have

opportunities to discuss their child's progress. For example, parents have attended sessions as part of the settling-in process and have been able to share valuable information with staff about their child. They feel they are kept well informed and can discuss any changes in care routines.

- Staff encourage children to actively explore outdoors and develop good physical skills as they balance, walk and climb. They support children to cooperate with one another and learn about the world around them. For example, children and staff discuss road safety and where it is safe to cross the road.
- Staff provide good opportunities for children to further develop their fine motor skills, and children competently use a variety of writing tools, big ribbons and pipettes. However, staff do not fully consider how to adapt group activities so that all children can take part and are highly engaged.
- The manager and staff discuss the priority for additional funding at the pre-school. They ensure it is used well to support children's developmental needs and reduce any differences in their learning. For example, visual aids have been incorporated to help children with routines and their understanding of what is happening now and what will happen next.
- Staff speak highly of the manager where they feel supported in their roles. New staff members feel valued and undertake an induction process to support training and preparation for their roles. Staff have very good opportunities for professional development to continually improve their teaching. This means children benefit from a good early years experience, delivered by well-qualified staff who put children first.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and how to protect children. They recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and know about wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff understand the procedures to follow and who they would contact if they were concerned about staff or children. Staff know who the designated safeguarding lead is and to report any concerns without delay. Staff carry out daily checks and risk assessments to ensure that the premises remain safe and secure. Robust recruitment and vetting arrangements are in place to help ensure that staff working with children are suitable.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- sharpen the focus on children's individual learning needs to build precisely on what they can already do and what they need to do next
- support staff to manage group activities and understand how this supports children's engagement to learning.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY302558
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10234911
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	17
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Apsley Lock Pre-school Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904066
<b>Telephone number</b>	07891 093 523
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 December 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Apsley Lock Pre School registered in 2005 and is operated by a management committee. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff; all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm. On Monday to Thursday, they open until 12.55pm for the lunch club. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Courtney McAllister

## 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 and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to children to find out about their time at the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took into account their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of a group activity.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager showed the inspector relevant documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff and their paediatric first-aid certificates.

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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