

Inspection of Alpha Pre-School

Westfield Terrace, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 8BB

Inspection date: 18 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children have strong relationships with staff at this welcoming pre-school. New children who need support to settle are offered cuddles from kind and caring staff, helping to reassure and calm them. Children are friendly towards visitors and their friends. For example, children say to each other, 'You are my best friend,' as they take turns drawing around each other's hands. Staff are good role models. Children react positively as they are reminded to be kind to each other and to share toys. Staff discuss road safety with children, teaching them to hold adults' hands when they are near roads to keep them safe.

Children develop their physical skills as staff teach them to use pedals on a bicycle. They smile as staff encourage them to persevere as they push the pedals around. Children develop their communication and listening skills as they listen to stories and take part in group singing sessions. They enthusiastically sing along with staff, joining in with the actions of the songs they know. Staff support older children's emerging writing skills as they are encouraged to have a go at writing their names. Children beam with pride as they are praised for their attempts.

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

- The staff know the children and their families extremely well. They gather information from parents when the children start, finding out what they already know and can do. Staff use children's interests to plan activities. They complete observations and assessments, and staff then develop the next steps in children's learning to help them to make progress.
- The manager uses additional funding, such as early years pupil premium, appropriately. Further resources are purchased to support children who need them the most. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff report that younger children need more support with their speech and language. The manager liaises with other professionals, such as health visitors, for advice and support to help bridge these gaps in learning.
- Staff extend children's learning well. For example, children learn how to keep themselves safe. They confidently share their understanding of traffic lights and that a car could 'hurt' them if they were to walk out onto the road. Staff extend this knowledge by introducing zebra crossings and how to use them.
- Overall, children engage well in activities and confidently explore their environment. They explore the leaves they have collected. Children scrunch them up, exploring the textures as they excitedly throw them in the air and say, 'It is snowing!' However, quieter children are not always encouraged to participate or engage in activities to further their learning and build confidence.
- Staff encourage children to develop their independence. Children confidently pour their own drinks and are offered healthy food choices at snack time. They

know to wash their hands when they are dirty. Staff discuss what a dentist is as children play with toy teeth and toothbrushes. This supports them to gain an understanding of what a healthy hygiene routine is.

- Staff teach children about the environment and the world around them. At lunchtime, children learn about recycling. Staff encourage them to think that packaging from their lunch boxes is paper and to put this in the recycling bin.
- Children show awareness of different emotions. For example, staff say they are scared of dinosaurs as they read a story. Children say they are 'brave' and that they will teach them how to be brave too. Staff use emotion puppets to further this as they talk about other feelings, such as happiness and sadness.
- Parents report that staff are 'wonderful'. They praise them for how they support the whole family and not just the children. Parents are aware of children's daily activities and receive regular feedback from staff. However, they are not sure what their children's next steps in learning are or how they can continue to support these at home.
- The manager is passionate about supporting the staff team. Staff report they feel supported by the manager and the pre-school committee and that their well-being is looked after. They receive regular feedback regarding their practice. Yearly appraisals help them to identify further areas for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand the different types of abuse children can be subjected to, including the signs and symptoms of female genital mutilation. They are confident about who to report concerns to about children or staff and to escalate these concerns if required. The manager refreshes staff knowledge by discussing safeguarding topics, such as county lines, during meetings. This supports the staff to be alert to potential signs of abuse. The manager and committee members are aware of their responsibility to check staff suitability to work with children. The setting is safe and secure, and ratios to ensure children's safety are maintained.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to improve their interactions with quieter children so that children can fully participate and engage in activities to further build their learning and confidence
- improve strategies for sharing information with parents about their children's next steps in learning and how they can continue learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219921
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10234354
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	26
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	Alpha Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909394
Telephone number	07966 512389
Date of previous inspection	2 December 2016

Information about this early years setting

Alpha Pre-School is based in Rushden, Northamptonshire. The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or level 4. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term times only. Monday sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am. Tuesday to Friday sessions are from 8.45am until 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natalie Vaughan Prosser

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The inspector and manager observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments used by children. The manager talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector viewed the pre-school and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they were doing during activities.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- A sample of relevant documentation was viewed by the inspector.

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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