

Inspection of Alconbury Community Pre-School

The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Alconbury, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 4EQ

Inspection date: 19 December 2023

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 happily arrive at the pre-school, keen to start their day. They confidently separate from their parents, demonstrating they feel safe and secure in the environment. Caring and nurturing staff know the children and their families well. They build close bonds and attachments with their key children and subsequently, children feel emotionally safe and are eager to learn. Children are happy, confident and settled.

The curriculum is well designed to support children's interests and builds on what they know and can do. Staff focus on what they know about children to create a rich variety of activities and experiences, both inside and outside. For example, children develop fine motor skills as they use pipettes to squeeze vinegar onto bicarbonate of soda. They delight as they watch and describe the reactions they see. Staff model appropriate language and ask open-ended questions about what changes are happening to the bicarbonate of soda as the vinegar is squeezed onto it. This gives children the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and supports their growing vocabulary. As a result, children develop a positive attitude to learning and make good progress across all areas of the curriculum.

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

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of manager. The new manager has a clear and ambitious vision of what she expects for children and families who attend the pre-school. Staff comment that the new manager is very approachable, has clear leadership skills and makes them feel valued and supported.
- The delivery of the curriculum is consistently good and has a positive impact on the progress of children. Staff have high expectations for all children. Well-embedded rules and routines enable children to know what is expected of them. Children's behaviour is good. Staff have clear intentions about what they want children to learn and differentiate their teaching to support the different ages and stages of the children in their group. However, at times, staff do not always provide a higher level of challenge to the most able children to help further extend their learning.
- As a result of positive interactions with skilled staff, all children, including those who speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop good communication skills. They benefit from enthusiastic staff who immerse themselves in children's play. Staff provide opportunities for children to communicate both verbally and non-verbally by using picture cards. Children readily invite staff into their role-play activities. Staff model and introduce appropriate language and engage in back-and-forth conversations.

- The manager and staff focus the curriculum well on ensuring that children gain the skills they need in preparation for school. They work closely with the local school to support children's transitions and meet with teaching staff to discuss children's learning. The manager and staff place high priority on supporting children's independence in preparation for future learning. Children independently blow their noses at the 'snuffle station', equipped with tissues and a mirror, and learn how to put on and take off their own coats. At mealtimes, children open their own lunch boxes and are provided with jugs to pour their own drinks. However, at times, staff support children without allowing them to try on their own first.
- Children demonstrate that they understand early mathematical concepts. They confidently talk about how big the Christmas pom-poms are, using words such as, 'big' and 'small', to compare the size. As adults share stories with children, they are learning about numbers. Children help to count the objects on the page and find the corresponding digits on toy elephants they hold. In the outdoor area, children count their steps as they play 'What's the time Mr Wolf'. Mathematical learning is carefully weaved into everyday routines.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are all aware of who their child's key person is and value the information shared about their child's learning and development. They comment that staff truly know their children and use this knowledge to support their children's development effectively. The manager is keen to further enhance links between home and the pre-school to ensure that all children make the best possible progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of safeguarding matters. They understand their responsibility to report concerns about a child's welfare and what to do should they have concerns about the behaviour of another adult. Procedures in place, such as when children are not collected when expected, demonstrate that staff respond appropriately and in a timely manner. This helps keep children safe. Children learn about road safety using the painted road in the outdoor area. They then put this knowledge into practice during trips out and about in the local community.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide a higher level of challenge to the most able children to help extend their learning even further
- support staff to recognise when to encourage children to do things for themselves, to further enhance their independence skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY251575
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10316803
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	19
Name of registered person	Alconbury Community Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP521172
Telephone number	
Date of previous inspection	3 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Alconbury Community Pre-School registered in 2003 and is committee run. The committee employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The manager holds an appropriate qualification at level 5. The pre-school opens from Monday to Thursday, during school term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carly Parkinson

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed their early years provision including the aims and rationale for their curriculum.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents.
- 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 inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager to consider the quality of teaching and learning.
- Discussions were held with staff, parents, and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school manager. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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