

Inspection of Appleton Thorn Preschool and Little Woodland

Appleton Thorn Village Hall, Stretton Road, Appleton, WARRINGTON WA4 4RT

Inspection date: 16 December 2024

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 arrive happily and settle quickly in this small, calm pre-school in which the ethos is to place the child and their family at the heart of everything they do. As children wait to enter, the air buzzes with quiet conversations. Parents, staff and children happily enjoy chatting with each other. Children enter eagerly, and staff support anyone who needs extra comfort and time to settle. Children quickly engage in planned activities and the resources staff provide. They make independent choices in their learning. Staff expertly seize every opportunity to enhance children's learning. Children delight as they push a toy pushchair across the playroom. Staff ensure children are safe and introduce mathematical concepts such as speed and distance to children as they play. Children are keen to have a go and enthusiastically get involved in the activities staff plan for them. Children understand staff's expectations for behaviour, as they gently remind them of these, such as sharing with their friends.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Learning outdoors is given priority, with the aim of ensuring children have fun and enjoy themselves as they are prepared for the eventual move to school. Staff understand the curriculum, and they target their teaching and interactions to support and encourage children's learning. Any additional funding received is appropriately spent, for example to enable children to attend for additional sessions.

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

- Leaders and staff gather relevant information from parents when children first start about what children already know and can do. Staff build on this information with their own initial assessment. They then use all the knowledge they have about children to create a personalised focus for learning. Staff monitor any identified gaps in learning, share these with parents and seek suitable support from outside agencies as needed. This helps to ensure any gaps close quickly and all children make intended progress.
- Leaders are clear in their roles and responsibilities. They have effective processes in place for self-evaluation and are aware of where they need to make any improvements. Staff comment that they feel well supported in their work. They have regular opportunities to meet with leaders to review their practice. Leaders set targets and provide high-quality training opportunities such as 'learning lunches' to help staff to improve their practice even further. This supports effective teamwork and ensures staff constantly enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Mealtimes are social occasions. Staff sit and support children and engage them in conversations. They encourage children to be independent. For example,

children are encouraged to have a go at peeling fruit. They confidently open containers and pour their own milk or water. Staff work with parents to ensure children's lunches are balanced and nutritious. Children are supported to learn valuable life skills, such as the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

- Staff recognise the importance of promoting children's communication and language skills and focus closely on this. Staff model single words and narrate children's play. They introduce new vocabulary, such as 'ignite' and 'flint', to help to extend children's vocabulary. There are some occasions when staff do not give children time to formulate a response to the questions they ask. This means some children do not have the opportunity to fully engage in conversations and share their knowledge.
- Staff identify opportunities effectively to introduce mathematics during children's daily experiences and play. Children are exposed to numbers in the environment and during singing. They also count as they scoop soil into tubs with corresponding numbers. In the garden, staff talk about direction and position as they direct children around the woodland. This helps to develop children's early mathematical skills and language.
- The pre-school supports children to develop a deep understanding about similarities and differences between themselves and others. Children are proud of who they are and their unique backgrounds. They learn about cultures, festivals and celebrations that are important to themselves and others. Children talk about what makes them unique and discuss differences being positive. Children are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to consistently support the development of children's conversational skills and allow children time to formulate a response to questions asked.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2693744
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10363688
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 3
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	45
Name of registered person	Antrobus Pre-School Nursery Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP533780
Telephone number	07445859676
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The pre-school registered in 2022 and is located in the village of Appleton Thorn, Warrington. It operates during school term time only. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Deborah Magee

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff and children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 of a planned activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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