



# **The Ark Montessori Pre-school**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY319634
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Boylan

<b>Setting Address</b>	The Beeches Baptist Church, Banstead Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3NL
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**Telephone number**

**E-mail**

<b>Registered person</b>	Brenda Barron
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care
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## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Ark Montessori Pre-School is one of two pre-schools that are privately run. It opened in 2006 and operates from Carshalton Beeches Baptist Church Hall. Children have access to two adjoining rooms and two outside play areas. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Attendance, with prior agreement, with the provider is at 09:00, with the main session beginning at 09:30 until 12:00. The lunch club is from 12:00 until 13:00.

There are currently 33 children aged from two years nine months to under five years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for early education. Children living in the local community attend. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and will support children who speak English as an additional language. Staff work within the Montessori philosophy.

The pre-school employs five staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children throughout the pre-school enjoy a good range of activities and experiences that promotes their well-being and contributes to a healthy life style. They play outside energetically, running, hiding in the bushes, climbing on the slide and logs. Children enjoy their regular music and movement sessions where they can listen to instruction, moving their bodies in time to the sound.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene practices through well-established everyday routines. They know, for example, why they need to wash their hands after coming in from the garden. Children use anti-bacterial gel on their hands before eating their snack and independently pour water into a bowl to wash after painting, drying their hands using paper towel. Children are protected from cross-contamination because staff have a good understanding of the pre-school's health and hygiene procedures. All staff have an up to date first aid certificate so are able to treat children effectively in the event of an accident. Children who are unwell are not admitted to the pre-school which protects the others from risk of infection.

Children benefit from the healthy selection of snacks at mid-morning. They sit in their key groups and help themselves to milk or water before cutting up a piece of fruit. This is a social occasion and staff ensure children are encouraged to communicate and share information, for example, talking about a toy brought from home and listening to a discussion about "tea" and how it is grown. If children become thirsty during the session they are able to pour out a drink which helps prevent dehydration and helps them to think about personal needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, child-orientated environment where they grow in confidence and feel secure. They have access to a wide range of good quality play materials that are checked for safety and are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children are well supervised and good security arrangements mean children can play safely. They are unable to leave the building without a known adult and there are

procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. Children are learning the importance of keeping themselves safe. They have to listen to rules, such as, no walking on the slope in the garden because "you might slip and hurt yourself".

There are good fire safety precautions in place and children practise the emergency plan fairly regularly. Appropriate risk assessment ensures children are not at risk from potential hazards.

Children's welfare is safe-guarded as staff have a good understanding of child protection. They have attended training and are aware who to contact if they have concerns about a child in their care.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled within the pre-school. They benefit from strong bonds with consistent staff who look after them well and take into consideration individual needs. All of which helps to foster, positive emotional well-being. Children separate from their main carer well, change into their tabards and plimsolls ready to start the day. They show interest and excitement on seeing the activities laid out and listening at circle time to what they will be doing for the session. Staff have just started working with the Birth to 3 matters framework and adapt some activities so they are suitable for the younger children.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They provide a good variety of activities and experiences for children, that help them make steady progress in all areas of learning. Children come into the pre-school eagerly and are motivated to take part in activities. Staff make regular observations of children's development which is linked to all the areas of learning. However, there is no clear system to ensure staff assess children's starting points and next steps in their progression towards the early learning goals.

Children are keen to communicate and enjoy circle time when they can answer questions about the weather and what is the date today? They settle quickly when it is time for key group stories and love to point to the pictures in familiar books, such as, "The Hungry Caterpillar". Children enjoy using their imagination to go shopping in the supermarket or an appointment at the doctor's surgery. They show an interest in number and like to count at every opportunity, for example, how many children are left at home time?

Children are particularly attentive when planting potatoes, tomatoes and lettuce, which they look after carefully, watering and finally picking and eating the final result. There are good opportunities for children to explore science, such as, melting ice and sorting shells in sand. Staff use a lot of natural resources, for instance, dried pasta and rough and smooth textures for children to feel and talk about. Hand and eye

coordination is developing well and children like to practice cutting out their own shapes, for example, " look, this a house now and these lentils are the people and furniture".

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident and relaxed. The friendly and caring approach of the staff supports good trusting relationships. Children talk eagerly about their home and things that are important to them, such as, " I'm going on a train" and "going to the supermarket with mummy to buy some dinner". Children are beginning to become aware of the wider and local community. They go to the local greengrocers to buy the fruit for snack, enjoy having visitors, such as a male nurse and excitedly receive a thank you letter from Buckingham Palace because they sent the Queen an 80th birthday card.

Children are starting to be aware of their own and others' cultures through a range of resources: for instance, books, posters and a photographic routine written in several languages. They participate enthusiastically when it is time to sign their "good morning" to staff during circle time. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good systems in place to support children who have learning disabilities. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensure children's individual needs are well planned and met.

There is good partnership with parents. Staff work hard to establish relationships with parents which contributes to consistent care. Parents are given information about the provision, the curriculum and Foundation Stage. This is achieved by invitations to regular coffee mornings where they can discuss their child's progress with the key worker and look at photographs of the children at play. Parents are given good opportunities to be involved at the pre-school, for example, building a "dead hedge" in the garden. This construction helps prevent children falling down a slope in the garden.

Children are well behaved and benefit from the calm and gentle approach of the staff. They are learning important social skills, such as, taking turns and waiting until everyone one has a drink and something to eat at snack time. Staff have clear guidelines when managing the children's behaviour, for example, consistent boundaries and praising at every opportunity. This contributes to children's positive self-esteem.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a staff team who are experienced, committed and work well together. They are suitably qualified and have been vetted due to effective recruitment procedures. Staff are aware of their roles and children receive good

support through the appropriate deployment. Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework and are working towards a system where this links into the Foundation Stage.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There is strong commitment to develop and improve the provision and good use is made of outside support. Staff are offered good opportunities to attend training which updates their knowledge. However, the informal system in place does not fully monitor and evaluate the curriculum to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The premises are well organised with children able to move around freely. Space is laid out to maximise play opportunities and encourage independence. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place which are regularly reviewed. These help guide staff in ensuring children are cared for consistently. Most of the records which contribute to the children's health, safety and well-being are in place. However, the system to record the children's attendance does not include the hours of attendance and there is no complaints log. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

#### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

### **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the system for recording children's hours of attendance is maintained
- devise and implement a system for keeping a log of complaints made by parents

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- take into consideration children's starting points and next steps when assessing and monitoring their development
- develop a system where teaching and activities can be evaluated

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)