



The Ark

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY320350 |
| Inspection date | 13 July 2006 |
| Inspector | Kathryn Mary Harding |
| Setting Address | Hall Bank, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 0RF |
| Telephone number | 01743 791839 |
| E-mail | rozyoung@yahoo.co.uk |
| Registered person | Ark Childcare (UK) Limited |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day care, Out of School care |

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.

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 good. 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 Day Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in the village of Pontesbury, near Shrewsbury. A maximum of 48 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children can access an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 41 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these,

one child receives funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a warm clean setting where they learn the importance of appropriate personal hygiene and personal care through the daily routines. Signs showing children how to wash their hands properly are displayed but children are not always reminded to wash their hands prior to eating. Consequently children's good health is not fully promoted.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they discuss what foods are good to eat. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which are freshly prepared by a cook on site. Children are involved in the whole food process as they often accompany staff to the shops to help purchase the fresh food. They grow courgettes and runner beans in their vegetable plot which they will eat. They are offered drinks such as milk and water at snack time and can help themselves to drinking water or squash throughout the day, enabling them to meet their own needs if they become thirsty.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. There are outdoor activities to help them develop control of their bodies. They go for walks around the village and to the local play area which help develop their physical skills. They ride around on trikes, bikes and use the slide and climbing frame. They can access a wide range of equipment such as construction sets, play dough and lacing cards to help develop their fine control skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff on arrival. The rooms of the nursery are made more welcoming by children's work, posters and photographs being displayed on the walls. The rooms are checked prior to the children arriving and regular written risk assessments are recorded. The entrance door is monitored by use of a CCTV camera, so helping to keep children safe.

Children independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment, which meet safety standards and are regularly checked. Resources are organised in open shelf storage units, at child height, so encouraging children's independent access.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they are reminded about road safety when on outings and staff read stories linked in with safety themes to re-enforce their learning. They are encouraged to help tidy the resources away after use. Staff have the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and three staff have attended a workshop on child protection matters.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident in the setting's welcoming and caring environment. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide their planning and recording of progress. Individual planning for the babies is in place so the next steps in their development and progress are catered for.

Babies enjoy the positive interaction they receive from the staff and their independence is encouraged well as they are encouraged to reach out for toys. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home and staff are very attentive to their needs. Children enjoy developing their senses as they stick and glue their pictures and play with the construction sets. They develop early communication skills as they look at books with the staff.

Staff spend time talking, holding and supporting the children in their play. Lots of cuddles and eye contact help to promote their well-being. They take part in a good range of varied activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable such as exploring in the sand. Staff know the children well and cater for their needs appropriately, adapting the daily routine if necessary. Children throughout the nursery develop good relationships with staff and each other. They learn to share and take turns from an early age. They enjoy their time in the nursery and staff have fun with the children, giving them a sense of belonging and making them feel valued as they make funny noises with the toys.

Children have opportunities to make decisions about what they want to play with, so increasing their independence. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children play well together as they play in the toy garden and pretend to water the flowers.

Staff offer a good level of support to children, explaining activities and guiding children before giving assistance. This helps children to develop independence. Staff have a good understanding of child development which enables them to offer good care.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a good understanding of how young children learn and progress. Consequently, children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Planning provides suitable guidance for staff to ensure a wide range

of activities and experiences are provided for children to extend their learning in all areas. However, at times, the learning opportunities for older or more able children are not sufficiently developed. Staff use good methods to maintain children's interest. They are sensitive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions to challenge their thinking.

Children access a good range of well chosen resources which support their development across all areas of learning. They behave well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem. They play happily together and concentrate for sustained periods of time when playing with the construction sets. At child-led times children plan what they are going to play with and freely choose and confidently make decisions, so encouraging their independence and self-confidence.

Children confidently talk in small groups about the vegetables they are growing in their vegetable plot and what they need to do, to make them grow. They listen intently to stories, become involved in them and staff relay stories in a lively way, so encouraging and motivating the children's interest in books. However the book area is not inviting and children do not readily access books. Children do not access a well-resourced writing area. They enthusiastically sing nursery rhymes such as "Incy Wincy Spider".

Children gain confidence in using and recognising numbers during the daily routines and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned and spontaneous opportunities. They are encouraged to solve problems in a practical way, for example, when they sing "Five Little Ducks". As children pick up the books they talk about which is the heavy one. They look at and explore shape as they talk about the different shapes of the musical instruments as they draw around them.

Children gain knowledge of the world around them and of time and place through a variety of activities. They freely talk about their families and their lives and important events to them, such as where they have been on holiday and how they got there, so making them feel valued. To gain an awareness of the world around them they visit a local farm and agricultural machine garage. They explore, predict and investigate when looking at the beans they are growing and when playing in the sand.

Children's large scale movement skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, including activities to develop skills of climbing and pedalling. They move confidently around the indoor and outdoor area and access a wide range of activities to develop their fine control skills including construction sets and lacing cards.

They explore using their senses, different textures and materials. They talk about the different colours of the cups and of the flowers. They play imaginatively with the chairs as they pretend they are on a train journey. However there are limited craft resources and role play activities available for children's creative development to be fully promoted. They play the musical instruments as they move around the room singing "The Grand Old Duke of York".

Systems are in place that support children with special educational needs to effectively meet their needs. This includes liaising very closely with parents, external agencies and drawing up individual education plans.

Overall, children make sound progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued, listened to and respected as individuals. Their awareness of diversity and understanding of others is extended as the nursery have a range of activities and resources to positively reflect diversity. They look at different festivals such as Diwali and take part in activities linked in with the festival.

Systems are in place, such as individual education plans and staff liaise very closely with parents and external agencies to effectively promote children's learning.

Staff have a calm, positive approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children behave well and understand what is expected of them, so they know they have to take turns with the toys and resources. Good behaviour is encouraged as the staff give lots of praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts, enhancing their self-esteem. At snack time good manners are encouraged and kindness and respect is promoted so children relate well to each other and learn to have consideration for others. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff, parents and external agencies all work together to meet each child's needs and ensure their protection. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child by completing a form detailing the child's routine and daily diaries are completed for younger children. This ensures consistency of care. Parents are invited to parents' evenings to discuss their child's achievements and talk with staff daily about their child. They are invited on trips and to attend other events. A notice board detailing the plans for all children is available so ensuring parents are fully aware of topics and projects. Very positive comments on the service the nursery offers have been received from parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. They are shared with parents to keep them well informed about the service and their child's activities and regularly evaluated and reviewed. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The registered person uses effective recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Most of the required paperwork is in place. However staff do not sign in the time of their arrival or departure in the register. Staff are friendly and caring and work

very well together as a team to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. They attend regular training so demonstrating a commitment to developing their practice.

The baby room is organised effectively so children's needs are met. However the organisation of the toddler and pre-school rooms does not fully promote children's creative and literary development.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

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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 that good hygiene procedures are followed at all times
- ensure that all staff record their times of arrival and departure.

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):

- continue to develop the learning opportunities for the older and more able children

- ensure that the environment is organised to effectively promote children's learning particularly with regard to communication, language and literacy and creativity

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