



## The Ark Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	218256
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Holmes
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Martins Centre, Ellerbeck, Stoneydelph, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4JA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 897993
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Ark Nursery Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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](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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Ark Nursery is run by a committee and opened in 1992. It operates from a church centre situated on a housing estate on the outskirts of Tamworth. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.15 until 11.45 and from 12.15 until 14.45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 54 children aged from 2 years 6 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 41 children receive funding for early education, of these 10 children are 4 year olds and 31 children are 3 year olds.

The nursery employs six staff. Half hold an early years qualification to level 3, two are qualified to level 2 and one member of staff working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a very positive attitude to exercise because staff plan fun and challenging activities in and outdoors. Gasps of 'wow' are heard as children enter the hall to see equipment set out as an obstacle course. They listen intently to the imaginative guidance from staff about how they need to cross over the bridge, balance around the river and then throw the bean bags into the hoop. Children show great excitement and are eager to have another go which gives them chance to practise their new skills, or have a try on their own, after receiving all the support they needed to achieve the task. After undertaking exercise children's attention is then drawn to how exercise has affected their bodies, for example, if their heart is beating fast. This helps children to begin to develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Children learn the importance and value of good personal hygiene through well-established routines, such as washing hands after using the toilet and before snack time. When asked children are able to explain why this is important and they are able to carry out these routines with minimal adult support. Children are also taught to use a tissue to clean their own noses. Tissues are available within their reach and staff encourage children to recognise when they need to clean their nose. This helps to reduce cross contamination of germs and helps children to take an active role in keeping themselves healthy.

Children receive sufficient drinks and snacks which comply with their individual dietary requirements. They have a choice of juice or milk at snack time and enjoy fresh fruit for snack time on most days.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is a bright and welcoming environment. Children's work and information for parents is prominently displayed. When children arrive staff are on hand to greet and play with them. Children enter and begin to play immediately with the range of resources and toys that have been set out for them. They are able to move freely and confidently into the different areas of the room. Some children head straight for the home corner, some choose the large carpeted area to play on the floor with bricks and small world play, whilst others choose to play with the range of table tops toys or go into the writing area or book corner. The range of child friendly storage in the room enables children to select toys and resources of their own choice and they have their own drawers to store their work and personal items. This all contributes to children developing a sense of belonging and feeling at ease at the nursery.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all staff demonstrate concern and are vigilant regarding children's safety. Daily routines are well-established to support

children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff use clear explanations to remind children about safety, including the safety rules for walking down the stairs to go to the outdoor play area. They have regular opportunities to practise the fire drill so that they are confident about the evacuation procedures.

Staff have a sound understanding and knowledge of the signs and symptoms that may alert them to child abuse and they have contacts numbers for the Local Safeguarding Children Board in the event they need to share a concern about a child. However, the written child protection policy and procedure for the nursery does not comply with the Local Safeguarding children's board procedures. This means that staff could follow incorrect procedures and the information for parents relating to child protection is not correct. This potentially compromises children's welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Children confidently enter the welcoming environment of the nursery. They particularly benefit from staff working closely with parents on admission and on an ongoing basis. Good support is given to children to settle in their own time. As a consequence the individual needs of the children are identified and met well. Children's self-esteem is promoted because the staff show a genuine interest in them, they take time to talk to them, play with them and listen to what they say and value their contributions. As a result children are happy, at ease and enjoying their time at the nursery. Children under three years play happily with a good range of resources to promote imaginative play. They play together in groups engrossed in acting out activities, such as, dressing up and cooking food. Consequently, children's social skills are developing well. Children's language and communication skills are promoted very well. They sing songs and rhymes, listening to stories and have lots of opportunities to talk in small and large groups and receive individual attention from staff that constantly talk to them and ask questions. This contributes to children learning to speak clearly and being able to express their needs and feelings. All children enjoy exploration with paint, water and sand which helps children represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways, although they are not able to access these resources at all times. This potentially limits their creativity. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively. They use observations and assessments to show how each child is developing new skills and to help them to plan for the next steps for play and learning.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and make progress. A range of fun and stimulating activities are planned which cover the six areas of learning. Activities are evaluated and staff plan time to revisit activities to consolidate children's learning. Staff are deployed effectively and use space well to ensure children are given the support and independence that they need to progress in their learning. Staff talk positively to children at all times and provide clear explanations and directions. This results in a very caring calm environment where children develop a strong sense of acceptable behaviour. Staff model investigate behaviour and ask children open ended questions which encourages children to seek explanations and demonstrate what they know and understand. This approach significantly enhances the progress children make. Staff record detailed observations which

are then transferred to children's assessment records. In general they use this information well to inform planning for children's next steps in learning and to ensure that activities offer challenge. However, this is not yet used comprehensively to identify children's next steps in all the six areas of learning. This does not fully ensure children are fully challenged to progress at all times, particularly in the area of mathematical development.

Children are progressing very well because they are interested, excited and motivated to learn. Their eyes widen and their smiles grow as their attention is brought to the wide range of activities set out for them to play. They listen intently, eager to take part in fun activities such as passing the parcel to guess what is inside. They are confident to find out information for themselves, such as what the visiting inspector is doing and why. Children's skills and understanding in early language and literacy is fully and effectively supported. As a result children's progress along the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals in this area is very advanced. For example, some children read a range of familiar and common words independently and identify the sound and shape of letters in their own name and in other words. They write for a number of different purposes, showing particular enjoyment in writing captions for the pictures in their news books. They are confident to take an active part in conversations and use complex sentences to express their thoughts, such as, what type of weather they like and why. One child said he liked the wind best because he could fly his kite and the wind felt nice on his face. Children are developing a general interest in early mathematics through a range of practical activities. For example, they enjoy counting how many children are at the snack table to find out how many pieces of fruit are needed so that everyone has one. They know the measuring stick is used for finding out how tall they are and they enjoy activities such as recognising and recreating patterns with the bears and weighing sand on large scales in the sand play. However, this area is not as rich in challenge for children. Staff include plenty of opportunities to enable children to develop an interest in the natural world and features of their environment. For instance, children are encouraged to discuss how they travelled to nursery and what they saw. They enjoy stories about where animals live and what they eat. There are discovery trays with items such as fire cones, conkers and tree bark for children to explore with magnifying glasses. Children competently use a wider range of different materials to construct and design. One child made a house and garden for small dolls, complete with bedroom and area for a bouncing castle. Children generally make good progress in creative development. They learn how to make sounds with musical instruments and can use their hands to clap loudly or quietly. Children are introduced to different materials and techniques and can use line, shape and colour in their work but do not always have opportunities to express their own ideas with the full range of materials. Children make very good progress in physical development. Good planning and good facilities mean that children have very good opportunities for physical development throughout the year. With the help of planned interventions by staff, they learn how to use a good range of large and small equipment and move with control and co-ordination. Children experience movement in confined and open spaces and can adjust their body movements accordingly, as well as balance and hold positions. They develop control with tools and materials requiring manipulative skills, such as pencils and scissors.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. All children are valued and respected as individuals and their confidence and self-esteem is developed well by staff with the use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the session. Children are busy, occupied and keen and interested to learn. They learn to share, take turns and develop a sense of concern for others. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent the wider community which helps children to learn about and respect diversity. The setting's policies promote inclusion for all children. Children with learning difficulties are generally supported well. A special educational needs co-ordinator is currently being inducted because the previous post-holder has recently left. However, staff have not actively monitored the inclusion of children who only attend the afternoon sessions. This potentially limits some children's learning.

All children benefit from the good relationships between staff and parents. Information is regularly shared so that parents are kept fully informed about the setting's policies and procedures, routines and children's involvement in activities. The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is very good. Parents enjoy being involved in the educational programme. They appreciate the monthly written curriculum information they receive which also informs them of how they can support their child's learning at home. They enthusiastically work in partnership with staff to support their children's learning, particularly in early literacy. They also value informal opportunities to talk to staff at the beginning and end of sessions, and find staff friendly, helpful and approachable. This partnership significantly enhances children's progress. However, although the manager is aware of the new regulations regarding complaints the written policy has not yet been updated to ensure parents are aware of the procedures now in place. This potentially compromises children's welfare.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall the needs of children are met. Recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who are suitable and have been appropriately vetted. There is a good level of qualified staff who are committed to improving and developing their practice. Space and resources are mostly used well. This has a positive impact on children's care, learning and welfare.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are good. The recent addition of a permanent manager following a period of temporary management has resulted in the formation of a clear vision and commitment to improving learning for children. Procedures to evaluate the provision of nursery education and identify strengths and weaknesses through evaluation of plans and self-evaluation of individual and whole nursery performance are underway, but there is not yet an effective system to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes.

All the required documentation is in place and all records are stored confidentially. This contributes to the safe and efficient running of the group. In general policies and procedures are in place and effectively implemented to support children's good health, safety, care and learning. However, in some areas policies and procedures require improvement.

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

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to ensure the times of arrival and departure for children are recorded. Staff now record children's arrival and departure as children enter and leave the building. This ensures there is an accurate record of children's attendance which is a regulation.

At the last inspection the nursery also agreed to ensure the complaints policy includes Ofsted's details. Parents are now informed of the regulators address and telephone number.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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 good.

### **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):

- up-date the complaint policy in line with the current regulations
- ensure that the child protection procedure for the nursery complies with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards procedures including the procedure in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteers
- make sand, water and creative materials more accessible to children
- ensure activities are planned to include children who attend afternoon sessions.

#### **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):

- further develop the use of observation and assessments to inform planning for children's next steps in learning and to ensure that activities offer mathematical challenges to all children

- continue to identify strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision and implement a system to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of any changes.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)