

# The Ark Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119271
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Elizabeth Lewington
<b>Setting Address</b>	144 High Street, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 7AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 778800 am only
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Ark Pre-school
<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 good. 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 Pre-School first opened in 1998. It is situated in a building behind the Baptist Church in the centre of a village. The group operates from the church hall, which is available for the sole use of the group during session times. Toilet and kitchen facilities are available nearby. There is also a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-School is registered to care for a maximum of 18 children between two and five years old. There are currently 26 children on roll. This includes 24 funded three and four year olds. The group caters for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions last from 09:30 to 12:00 from Monday to Friday.

There are currently five members of staff including the supervisor and deputy all working part-time. Staff hold a variety of qualifications including a Certificate in Early Years, Diploma in Pre-School Practice and an International Teaching degree. The pre-school is managed by the church committee and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

The setting takes positive steps to encourage children's good health. Children enjoy healthy substantial snacks everyday of toast and marmite followed by fruit. Snack time is a relaxed happy social occasion. Staff closely supervise the children as they independently pour their own drinks of water or milk. However, children do not currently have access to water independently throughout the session.

Children enjoy their play and learning in a clean and pleasant environment where sensible measures are taken to promote good health and hygiene. Children show an awareness and understanding of the importance of washing their hands before snack and after messy activities. Children independently get tissues if they require them and dispose of them hygienically. Staff hold first aid qualifications and good care is taken to ensure they remain up to date ensuring any accidents can be dealt with effectively. Children learn about their bodies and talk about the importance of exercise to stay healthy.

Physical development is promoted extremely well through the good daily routine, providing children with opportunities to develop their large and fine movements both indoors and out.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted well due to the measures taken by the staff. For example, a clearly visible risk assessment is undertaken each day to ensure the environment is safe and suitable for the children's use. Fire evacuations are undertaken regularly enabling the children to learn to leave the premises quickly and safely if required. Children develop their awareness of safe behaviour as they are reminded to pick up toys to prevent tripping and to walk indoors.

Good use is made of the large well maintained naturally light hall enabling the children to experience a variety of activities. The setting is well equipped with appropriate toys and resources to interest and aid the children's learning and play. Children play safely in the secure outdoor area where there is space for running, jumping and the use of wheeled toys. However, the toilet facilities can not be independently accessed by the children. Low level storage, tables and chairs promote the children's easy access to their activities.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staff's understanding of the procedures they need to follow if they have child protection concerns regarding a child in the setting. Staff have undertaken child protection training and a clear procedure is displayed on the notice board for all to see.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting confidently, they greet adults and children and many confidently start conversations. The daily routine provides the children with a sense of security. The routine enables the children to make choices in their play, experience an activity as a group where they listen to each other, enjoy a sociable snack time and experience energetic and restful activities.

## Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Plans indicate a wide variety of experiences are made available to the children enabling them to develop their interests and skills. Observation of the children helps to inform the records of individual development. Staff recognise each child's individuality and ability and extend play where required to enable children to develop. For example; A child using scissors was very competent whilst others were still grasping the art of using the scissors. The adult asked if she would like to make a snake. The child agreed and then skilfully followed the line the adult had drawn to proudly create a spiralling snake. However, some staff do not appear confident managing a large group, for example at the start of the session. This means that all children do not benefit from the group experience.

Children have good opportunities to see their names around the setting and many recognise them. They enjoy story time listening and offering comment on the story. Children use books competently, turning the pages and looking at the pictures to follow the story. A good range of fact and fiction books are available to them. Many children confidently speak out in a large group as they discuss the story, or the weather. Children use paper and pens, pencils to draw, make marks and notes.

Children talk about shape, size and position as they play. Adults encourage ideas and introduce words. For example in the water play the adult drew the children's attention to the size of the containers. As they play outside they stretch to get tall and crouch down to make themselves small. Opportunities to count are seized. The children count how many are present at the start of the day and at playtime. They look at the numerals and identify numbers competently.

Children have good opportunities to develop their creative abilities. They make shapes in the dough, enthusiastically paint with brushes, and sponges, and enjoy the experience of covering their hands in paint. They use puppets to make puppet shows and enjoy imaginative play as they pretend to buy tickets in the train station.

Children develop their physical abilities very well as they use the outdoor environment for free and structured play. They stretch and run and jump in the outdoor area. Many competently use wheeled toys. Children enjoy organised ring games which encourage their abilities to control their movements and work with others. Indoors they have very good opportunities to develop their finer movements as they use scissors, pens and pencils, construction toys and cutters and rolling pins in the dough.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing through daily conversations about the weather, planned and unplanned activities. They are growing plants, including potatoes in the outside area. Each day they look at them and decide if they need to be watered. They use computers, competently moving the mouse across the screen and following instructions.

Children talk about their homes and families as they play; they relate their experiences in their play. They are developing their independence as they find their own coats and clean their hands after messy activities. At snack time many pour their own drinks with supervision. The adults encourage the children to learn to share and take turns as they play games. Children learn about their community and have visited the local library and fire station.

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

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Children are delighted to have their parents helping in the setting. A daily rota invites parents to help, enabling them to see what the children do. They prepare the snack and share any special interests. This valuable help enables the staff to focus on the children more closely throughout the session. A regular newsletter shares basic information about the children's activities. However, there is little information available for parents about the areas of learning and how they can extend children's learning at home.

Information is gathered about every child in order to understand individual need. The staff work with parents and other professionals to ensure any special needs are addressed. Whilst the setting is a church pre-school they welcome children of all faiths. Activities enable the children to learn about the customs and traditions of others. Children go on outings in their local community enabling them to learn about their local environment, including visits to the library, fire station and on a bus to a local park. Books and resources support the children's learning, awareness and acceptance of difference.

Behaviour is good. Children show concern for others. They are encouraged to use good manners by the positive example set by the staff. Staff praise children enthusiastically and genuinely for their achievements. This builds the children's self esteem and confidence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Regular staff meetings enable the staff to plan an interesting curriculum for the children where good consideration is given to all areas of learning. Staff have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding through attending courses. The committee and staff team actively support the pre-school in providing a forward thinking environment for the children.

The setting provides enjoyable positive experiences for children. Their health is promoted well through the clean environment and healthy snacks. Safety is managed effectively through sensible risk assessments and a clear understanding of child protection issues. Children enjoy and achieve in the environment because they feel secure and confident enabling them to take full advantage of the activities offered. The children make a positive contribution to the local community as they develop their understanding and acceptance of others, and learn to behave with consideration for others. Parents are valued and play an active part in the pre-school session. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection improvements were required to medication records, the attendance register and procedures to prevent children leaving unsupervised. The records and attendance records all contain the appropriate information and are maintained clearly, providing a clear record. Children are closely supervised at home time as parents enter the setting to collect their children from inside the hall.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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 good. 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):

- improve toileting routine to encourage independence and privacy
- enable children to access drinks of water independently throughout the session

#### **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):

- improve information for parents regarding the areas of learning and how they can help develop childrens learning at home.
- continue to develop staff confidence in managing large group.

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)