

# Ark in the Park

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	154066
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Heather Morgan
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ark in the Park
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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?

Ark in the Park is a privately owned day nursery that opened in 2001. It operates from a large Victorian property situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Newton Abbot. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, where they also have supervised access to two ponies.

A maximum of 78 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. There are currently 132 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 43 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 30 members of staff employed to work directly with the children 19 of whom hold a relevant Level 3 qualification and another 10 of whom are currently working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well as they are encouraged to develop healthy eating practices. They enjoy regular meals that are prepared daily using fresh produce. Children have opportunities to make individual choices, such as which healthy option to choose at snack time. The older children are able to help themselves to drinks of water throughout the day, and younger children and babies are offered regular drinks to ensure they are all well hydrated.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident or illness as staff follow clear policies and procedures to protect children from the risk of infection and take appropriate action if they are hurt. Each room has a first aid kit and there are always staff on duty who hold a current first aid certificate. Children suffering from infectious illnesses are excluded from the nursery to limit the risk of spreading their illness to others. Clear records of accidents and administration of medication are kept. These are countersigned by parents but do not always include dates and the times doses are administered, to ensure children's continuity of care.

Children are learning the importance of protecting themselves from the risk of infection as they develop good hand washing routines, using liquid soap and disposable paper towels. They are also aware of the risks of spending time in the sun as they discuss why they need to wear sun hats and sun protection cream. Hygienic nappy changing routines are implemented consistently to protect younger children from the risk of cross infection.

Children of all ages benefit from access to the spacious outdoor play area. Older children develop their physical skills using a range of equipment such as a trampoline, wheeled toys and fixed climbing equipment. Younger, less mobile children are able to enjoy shaded areas of the garden as they play on mats and watch the older children.

Young babies' emotional well-being is supported by sensitive settling in procedures and a consistent staff team, although they do not always have opportunities to develop close bonds with a special person such as a keyworker.

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

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the well-maintained premises where they are grouped in base rooms according to their stage of development. This ensures that they only access resources that are appropriate for them. For example, young babies do not have access to equipment containing very small pieces that pose a choking hazard. A secure entry and exit system, monitored by a senior member of staff ensures that children are only collected by authorised persons.

Children's safety is supported by an effective risk assessment procedure that includes daily checks of each room. They are protected from potential hazards as staff take steps to minimise any identified risks. For example, safety gates are used to restrict access to stairs, electric sockets are protected by safety covers and any damage to property or resources is promptly reported and dealt with. Additional steps are taken to keep children safe when they are on visits away from the nursery. For example, adult ratios are increased and children wear high visibility jackets. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as they regularly practice fire drills that ensure they can quickly evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

Children's welfare and well-being is supported well as the staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. Senior members of staff attend additional training and have relevant documentation to support them in taking appropriate action in the event of any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

All children are happy, confident and settle quickly when they arrive at nursery. The attractive rooms provide a welcoming environment where they have good opportunities to choose from a variety of activities and access a good range of resources. Children under three are supported well by consistent, attentive staff who interact sensitively with them to promote their progress and development. Care is taken to follow familiar routines, particularly for the youngest babies. Activities provide the young children with opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. They enjoy close relationships with the staff and often benefit from individual or small group sessions where they can look at books, experiment with their voices and develop their communication skills. Staff plan specific activities each day but these generally involve creative experiences and do not reflect the wider development opportunities available to children. Although staff know the children well and observe their progress and development, they do not record this information or pass it on when children move from one base room to the next.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have very positive attitudes towards learning and enthusiastically engage in the wide variety of activities offered. Staff plan activities that link to a theme and this helps to sustain children's interest. For example, they explore different aspects of mini-beasts. Plans include information about additional support needed to ensure that all children are able to participate and make progress towards the early learning goals. Children are familiar with the routines of the nursery and confident in making independent choices from the available activities and resources. They have good concentration skills and are able to persevere for long periods to complete their chosen tasks, for example making pictures by hammering shapes onto a board. They enjoy learning about numbers and use them spontaneously in their play, for example counting to 10 when playing a game of hide and seek in the garden. They are very sociable and happily chat to one another when they are playing. Their communication skills are good and they are able to organise their co-operative play, for example by developing imaginative stories during role play. They are also developing an interest in the written word as they listen attentively to stories and attempt mark making for a range of different and meaningful purposes. For example, they write menus to use in their role play restaurant.

Staff engage effectively with children's play, encouraging their progress and development. They closely observe the children and keep valuable records of their achievements, supported by photographs and evaluations of their observations. Children's records include some tracking of their progress along the stepping stones, but these are not completed consistently and limit the effective use of this information in planning each child's next steps for learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the familiar, comfortable and welcoming environment of the nursery. They are greeted warmly by staff who know them well and pay good attention to meeting their

individual needs. Staff gather comprehensive information from parents to support them in meeting the children's needs and caring for them in accordance with their parents' wishes. Good attention is given to ensuring that children are supported well when they transfer from one room to the next. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They enjoy opportunities to spend time in mixed group sessions such as when they all play in the garden. This enables siblings to visit each other and for children to spend time with familiar carers who looked after them when they were based in another room. This helps to develop a good sense of community throughout the nursery. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through access to appropriate resources and sharing their experiences with others in the group. All children are supported well in accessing the activities of their choice, including those with specific or additional needs. Staff work well together and liaise closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children's needs are understood. Individual plans are developed to help children achieve appropriate targets.

Children's behaviour is very good overall. They respond well to the calm and consistent approach of the staff who role model good manners and respect for others. Children's good behaviour is regularly rewarded with praise and encouragement. As a result they have good manners, treat each other with respect and co-operate well with nursery routines such as tidying away their toys. There is a comprehensive behaviour management policy in place but this includes some inappropriate strategies for managing challenging behaviour presented by younger children as the procedures do not always reflect the stage of development and level of understanding of the children to whom they refer.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They have access to a wealth of information about the nursery education curriculum and have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the staff who care for them. They receive daily information about the activities their children have enjoyed and also a regular report on their progress towards the early learning goals. Newsletters keep them informed about the topics their children are following and this enables them to link their learning with activities at home. The good relationships and exchange of information between staff and parents have a positive impact on children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are well cared for by a dedicated and consistent team of staff who are committed to providing good outcomes for children. All staff are appropriately vetted to assess their suitability and those who do not already hold a relevant qualification are working towards one. The nursery is well organised and staff rotas ensure that children are cared for by familiar adults and that appropriate ratios are maintained. All regulatory documentation is in place and reviewed regularly. Staff are familiar with the policies and procedures of the nursery and these are implemented consistently to provide a safe, secure environment where children settle well and enjoy activities that promote their progress and development.

Leadership and management are good. Staff working with the older children plan an interesting range of activities that support progress in all areas of the curriculum. They are supported well by a senior management team who use regular appraisal meetings to identify training needs. There is a strong commitment to improvement within the team. Members of staff enthusiastically access additional training to support their professional development. Staff are encouraged to implement new ideas and share their knowledge with their colleagues.

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

At the last inspection some recommendations were raised to improve aspects of the children's care and delivery of the nursery education curriculum. Children's safety is now supported by comprehensive risk assessment procedures that identify potential hazards and appropriate steps to minimise the risks. All regulatory policies and documentation are in place and shared with parents to promote children's continuity of care. Staff plan an interesting range of activities that support children's progress and have begun to develop valuable records of their achievements. These are not always completed consistently and further development is recommended at this inspection.

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

Since 1 April 2004 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**

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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):

- develop procedures for monitoring and supporting the progress and development of children under three years
- ensure that all documentation relating to the administration of medication is completed appropriately
- develop appropriate strategies for managing the behaviour of children under three years; ensure that strategies take account of the children's stage of development and level of understanding

#### **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 assessment procedures to ensure that all children's progress is monitored consistently and this information used to plan for their next steps in learning

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)