

# The Ark Child Okeford

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	141096
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/05/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Eira Gill
<b>Setting address</b>	Child Okeford Centre for Care and Learning, St Nicholas C of E Primary School , Station Road, Child Okeford, DT11 8EL
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

The Ark in Child Okeford, Dorset, moved into very spacious accommodation in the grounds of St Nicholas Primary School in 2007. The setting is managed by a committee. The Ark has very close links with the school and there is full disabled access. It provides full day care for children for most of the year. The setting is open from 08.00 to 18.00 from Monday to Friday. Children attend morning or afternoon sessions or they can stay for a full day. All meals can be provided and are freshly cooked on the premises. Wrap-around care for children attending the school is provided by the breakfast club, after-school club and holiday playscheme.

The setting is on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register and caters for children from one to 11-years-old. There are currently 115 children on roll, of whom 90 are on the Early Years Register; 52 children are funded three and four-year-olds. A maximum of 40 children can attend at any one time, all of whom can be in the early years age group and only six can be under two-years-old.

The accommodation includes three main rooms to cater for the three age groups, a large lobby area, a kitchen, an office and separate toilet facilities for children and adults. The extensive and very well-equipped outside learning environment is shared with the host school.

There are 19 members of staff. The manager is in the final stages of an early years teaching degree course. The leader of the three to five-year-old group of children is a qualified teacher. Half of the staff have NVQ Level 3 qualifications and the remainder are working towards Level 3 or Level 2.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision is outstanding with very effective partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the host school. An inclusive and welcoming service is provided, which meets the needs of all children. Excellent systems in place, particularly self-evaluation, ensure that the children enjoy a very wide range of exciting and imaginative activities and make first rate progress. Planning and assessment are linked exceptionally well and children's progress is discussed and noted daily. All staff ensure that the children are very safe and secure at all times. A strong commitment to improvement is very evident and the capacity to improve is excellent.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- further improve outside learning environment to ensure there are more opportunities for children to explore sound

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Exemplary monitoring and self-evaluation ensure that the manager and her staff are continually finding ways to improve on their previous performance. Points for improvement from the last inspection have all been resolved and more improvements have been made. Leadership is totally on top of the many different levels of management demands that arise from the complex needs of the setting. This is because of the excellent relationships between all staff that lead to a very calm atmosphere where everyone is willing to work hard to ensure that each child feels unique. A strong work ethic is evident. Excellent systems in place for planning and assessment ensure that the needs and interests of the babies, toddlers and children are very well met and, as a result, their progress is rapid.

The manager, the three leaders and all other staff members liaise very effectively with parents and grandparents. Many positive comments were made such as, 'I'm quite relaxed about leaving him. He's dealt with fairly, justly and kindly'; 'They are totally happy, safe and well looked after'; 'The staff prepare the children well for school and they are learning phonics'; 'Continuity is excellent with the same staff here for years'. The setting welcomes children from all groups and strongly promotes inclusive practice. This was also commented upon very favourably by parents.

Links with the host school are excellent. Daily interaction in the outside learning area ensures the children get to know the children in the Reception year. Although the accommodation is provided by the school, the setting has ensured the shared outside learning environment is exceptionally well-equipped and children go outside in all weathers. The older children spend an hour each week in the Reception class during the summer term. The class teacher and staff members from the setting meet weekly to exchange relevant information. There is also exchange of information about children who attend the after school club when assistants collect them. One of the assistants works both in the Reception class and in the after-school club. This helps immensely towards the children's sense of well-being. Links with other agencies are very positive.

Very effective procedures are in place for identifying any baby, toddler or child at risk, thus ensuring all are well-safeguarded. Staff members are vetted appropriately. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure resources and the environment are safe.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

The setting is an exciting and safe place for children of all ages and their welfare is promoted exceptionally well. There is a sensible balance of adult-led and activities chosen by the children. Key workers note the children's choices and their progress. These notes ensure that plans for the next day or week include the next steps in learning for all children. Photography is also used to record children's progress.

During the day, in all weathers, children play outside with a very wide range of resources and equipment. Children play together well in the huge sandpit in their bare feet feeling the sand between their toes. They dig deep holes and say, 'we're making a pirate ship' and 'Have you found any treasure? Keep on digging because we want to find a ring.' Children have planted flowers and vegetables in old tyres and can count the number of tiny apples that are growing on the very young tree. They enjoy balancing the wooden beams across the very large tree stumps to make seesaws or bridges. Skilled assistants talk to the children about what they are doing and move them forward in their learning. Children use most of their senses while playing, although the setting intends to fix resources to the fence that will make different sounds when the breeze moves them around.

Indoors, children have a great variety of activities to choose from. They are guided into using equipment, such as computers, safely. They have a go at writing their names on their drawings. Their cutting skills move forward considerably when they cut out shapes of hands and they enjoy using the variety of coloured paints. Staff show their awareness of the needs of children from different backgrounds by sticking words in the first languages of two or three children around the room.

The toddler group enjoy making play dough and adding sparkly bits. They particularly like bashing their play dough cakes with a rolling pin to flatten them and one said, 'I made a circle'. They are learning to cut up their own fruit at snack time and to pour their own drinks. They are beginning to learn how to contribute to their community. The babies are given a sensory experience by smearing different colours of thick paint around on the table top carefully supervised by the assistants. They go outside and explore some of the equipment at certain times of the day, although a few still need to be in pushchairs. They are carefully guided to use equipment safely.

The manager and staff eat with the children at lunchtime. Nutritious food is cooked on the premises and most children eat heartily guided by the adults. Children learn how to use cutlery and to understand about being sensible and companionable while eating. They make significant progress in their learning and this contributes exceptionally well to their future economic well-being.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met