

# The Ark

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY320350
<b>Inspection date</b>	16/06/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Mary Anne Henderson
<b>Setting address</b>	Hall Bank, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 0RF
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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).

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 Nursery registered in 2006. It operates from a detached premises with three main activity rooms that all have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery resides in the heart of the village of Pontesbury near Shrewsbury. The group serves the local and surrounding areas.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 48 children at any one time and they are currently caring for 88 children from babies to under five-years-old on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and those children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens Monday to Friday each week from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. They also operate an out-of-school provision during the mornings and school holidays.

Eighteen members of staff work with the children. All but one have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 and 3. Two members of staff also hold Early Years Professional Status qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The group receives support from the local authority.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The staff work exceptionally well together and with the parents and carers to ensure positive relationships are very well fostered, thereby having a positive impact on the children. The staff also liaise very closely with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This ensures high levels of inclusion for all children on roll and that the individual needs of every child is fully identified and met. Children's free movement between the indoor and outdoor areas provides an interesting and challenging range of learning opportunities. There are excellent systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision and the capacity to make further improvement is also 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:

- ensuring the identified areas for continuous improvement within the self-evaluation systems are implemented.

## The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. All staff work very hard to foster positive relationships with the parents and carers. They provide a

very warm and stimulating environment for all children on roll. Staff liaise closely with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which promotes high levels of inclusion. There are extensive systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. The systems include high levels of input from the children, staff and parents. The capacity to make further improvement on an ongoing basis is excellent. Improvement since the last inspection ensures children's welfare is very well maintained. To further improve the high quality of the early years provision, the registered person should consider ensuring the identified areas for continuous improvement within the self-evaluation systems are implemented.

Staff ensure high standards with regard to children's safety and welfare at all times. The risk assessment procedures are very detailed and includes all areas, equipment and toys and all outings involving the children. The children are very well protected because all staff are aware of the policies and procedures to be followed. The staff ensure excellent hygiene procedures are implemented throughout the nursery thereby ensuring children's health and well-being is very well fostered .

The partnerships with parents is excellent. Parents have free access at all times to their child's learning and development files which provide them with extensive information about children's observations, their next steps in all areas of learning and examples of children's progression. Parents are included in the identification of their child's starting points in all areas of their learning and development. Daily verbal and written exchanges of information between the parents and the child's key worker ensures children's needs are continually met. Parents have free access to the extensive range of policies and procedures of the setting.

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

Children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and those things that contribute to this. For example, they talk about healthy eating during meal times and they are provided with a broad range of nutritious foods. This includes meat, fish, vegetables and a wide variety of fruit for snack times. They access drinks of water throughout the day during both indoor and outdoor play. Children are involved in growing a range of vegetables in their vegetable patch in the outdoor play areas. They harvest the vegetables and know they are eating them at mealtimes. They also talk about the benefits of physical activity on their bodies and explore this further through activities and stories. Children are very independent and confident and know to wash their hands before eating and after outdoor or messy play.

Children move with control and use a range of equipment to develop their physical skills. For example, they enjoy riding their trikes and scooters in the outdoor play areas and they enjoy using the space hoppers and running around in the fresh air. Children also paint and involve themselves in other activities while playing outdoors. All children, including the babies, can move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas throughout the day. Here, all children including the babies, explore the sensory parts of the gardens, touching and smelling the lavender and mint pots. The children learn about the importance of safety. They do this through

regular involvement in the fire evacuation procedures of the setting. They also learn about crossing the road safely during outings with their key workers and while using resources and listening to stories during adult-led activities.

Children find out about their environment, identifying features and noticing the natural world. They enjoy an extensive range of outings to places of interest. This includes walks in the local area where they visit the bakery to bring back some bread rolls. They also enjoy visiting the post office, vets and the agricultural shop where they find out about tractors and what they do. During local walks children also collect leaves and acorns bringing them back and looking at them closely using a magnifying glass. Other outings enjoyed by the children include visits to farms where they notice the various animals and talk about how they live and what they eat. The children enjoy regular use of the enclosed wooded area at the setting. Here, they become excited as they look under logs and leaves for insects using magnifying glasses and boxes. They become enthralled at finding the insects with their peers and talk about their findings with the staff. They also notice the birds flying by and the bees that land on the flowers. The children are able to make use of this area regardless of the weather. For example, after rainfall, the children enjoy running through the muddy puddles wearing their wellingtons and they enjoy playing in the snow during the winter season.

Children form positive relationships with their peers and the adults around them. They enjoy the company of their friends as they move between the indoor and outdoor areas as they wish and as they explore the wooded areas. Children's behaviour is excellent and they have a sound regard for each other and the adults around them. There is a broad range of children's art work and photographs displayed for the children and their parents in the play areas which fosters their sense of belonging very well. The children are very independent and enjoy making informed choices about what they want to play with during child-initiated play times.

Children explore colour, texture, shape and form in two and three dimensions. They enjoy using junk to create models. They also enjoy mixing paints to create their own pictures to take home or display on the walls as they play both indoors or outdoors. Children use their senses to explore various textures such as gloop, jelly and shaving foam, discussing what this feels like with each other and the adults. The children enjoy a broad range of opportunities for role play. This includes using their imagination as they pretend to be vets and hairdressers.

Children enjoy sitting in the comfortable book areas with the staff during indoor and outdoor play times. The staff read stories to them and encourage the children to join in with rhymes and singing. Children have a broad range of opportunities for mark making as they help themselves to the resources at the drawing table, scribble on pads during role play activities and enjoy painting activities both indoors and outdoors as they wish. Older more able children write their name on their work and help to make labels for displays and the toy boxes in the play areas.

Children say and use numbers in familiar contexts and they count and recognise numbers. They count the cars as they line them up on number cards and play card games which extends their understanding of mathematical concepts such as, add

one more and take one away. Children's understanding about number is further extended through the use of the computer and a range of challenging computer programmes. Their numeracy develops further as they weigh out ingredients and early science is introduced as they observe the cooking process over time.

Children are beginning to understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs. For example, they explore Eid, Diwali and Chinese New Year through stories and dressing up and also through tasting various foods from around the world. Children enjoy colouring in and other arts and crafts activities while they explore various festivals around the calendar year. They also enjoy exploring a range of toys that reflect positive images of diversity including dolls, musical instruments and looking at reference and story books about people from various cultures and people with disabilities.

## 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