

The Ark at Sherwood Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

The Ark at Sherwood Ltd is a privately owned provision and registered in 2009 under the Early Years and Childcare Register. It operates from a free standing self-contained building located in Sherwood Park school, situated in the London borough of Merton. Children currently have access to four play areas and bathroom areas. There is a secure area for outdoor play.

The provision opens from Monday to Friday, 9.00am until 3.30pm, during term times only. A maximum of 30 children may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 61 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range, the majority attend on a part-time basis. There are no children currently attending within the later years age range. The provision has a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff who work with the children. Of these, four hold relevant childcare qualifications at Level 2 and above, and two are currently training for appropriate qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery provides a generally safe and secure environment for children, who are all treated as individuals and are supported most effectively by staff who are committed to the care and learning of the children. Good relationships with parents and outside professionals are fostered to ensure relevant information is obtained for the benefit of the children. All the required records, policies and procedures are in place to support the safe and efficient running of the setting. The nursery is most inclusive recognising children's individual needs, likes and dislikes. Self-evaluation is in its infancy to enhance outcomes for children who attend.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- make sure fire equipment is serviced on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness in the event of an emergency
- ensure hot water in children's bathroom is effectively maintained to an appropriate temperature
- further develop the observations and assessment systems to ensure all children's learning is effectively tracked from their individual starting points across all areas of learning and next steps fully inform planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff safeguard the children well. They develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures which are shared with parents. The owner/manger has clear understanding of the procedure to follow should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. Staff thoroughly risk assess the premises, activities and outings to ensure reasonable steps are taken to effectively reduce hazards. However, there are a number of safety issues that need to be addressed; such as the fire extinguishers are not serviced on a regular basis to promote their effectiveness. The owner manager ensures new staff are suitable to work with the children through implementing appropriate recruitment and induction procedures. Staff have regular opportunities throughout the year to update their knowledge by attending various training such as; 'Rules, Praise, Ignore', Every Child a Talker (ECAT), sign-a-long, inclusion, child protection, common assessment framework and sounds and letters.

All the required documentation is in place and contains the correct information. They are kept securely to ensure confidentiality. There are numerous policies and procedures which underpin practice that have not been recently revised. Staff make parents very welcome and parents are very happy with the service and the quality of care their children receive. Notice boards provide relevant information to parents, such as weekly plans of activities, registration of certificate and staff's training certificates. Space is used well to create a free flow environment. The outdoor area is fully planned for to maximise opportunities for children to access the six areas of learning and develop physical skill and good health. There is a clear commitment to improving outcomes for children and plans have been implemented to extend the premises to increase places for children. Self-evaluation is in its infancy, however, the owner/manager is aware of some of the setting's strengths and weakness. Monthly staff meetings enable the staff to share their points of view about the quality of the setting.

Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of child development, and support children's learning and development well in all areas. They ensure the learning environment is welcoming and inviting. There are accessible resources to help children select toys and activities for themselves. For example, young children select books for themselves and sit in small groups or individually to look at them. Developmental files are maintained for each child, with photographs and examples of what they have been doing. Parents are welcome to view these at any time, although they do not yet contribute to them or provide starting points at contract stage. Staff understand each child's developmental needs and they demonstrate the importance of assigning a key person to each child. They work very well with other professionals to ensure that the needs of individual children are met. For example, very good links with outside professionals, such as local authority Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and portage worker. They are also in the process of developing meaningful links with the nursery class teaching staff to ensure children's developmental information is shared to enable continuity in their progress. Planning of activities is in place for groups of children and key staff understand each child's individual learning needs. The setting promotes equality

and diversity; practice is inclusive and staff ensure all children are involved. Toys and resources are of high quality and readily accessible throughout the setting to support children's learning and development.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and developing their confidence as they enjoy their time in the nursery. They benefit from the care, activities and play opportunities provided by qualified and experienced practitioners who have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn. The key worker system ensures children form strong attachments with people who know them well and are conscious of their individual needs to support them to achieve effective outcomes. Children behave well and learn how to share and cooperate with others. Their good health and well-being is promoted well. Staff take effective action to prevent the spread of infection. They learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe through everyday practices such as washing their hands before eating and helping themselves to drinks when they are thirsty. Parents provide children's lunches and staff provide healthy snacks of fresh fruit to contribute towards a healthy diet.

Children enjoy themselves and are busy in their play. They learn to make decisions from a young age as the free flow environment promotes children's choices as to where and what they want to play with. Their interest in music is developed, as they access musical instruments and shake them along to familiar nursery rhymes and songs. The labelling of children's work, visual words and numbers around the setting raises children's awareness of how print carries meaning and helps to enhance their understanding. Children who have English as an additional language are supported well, for example, through sensitive liaison with parents. They see words in their own language used as labels around the setting and parents are invited in to share knowledge about their cultures and language. Children with speech and language delay are well supported through the effective use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Makaton signing. Children have many opportunities to recognise their names as they have to find their name at lunch time. Also, the routine for snacks promotes children's knowledge of their peers' names for snack registration. Staff use recognised systems for learning letter names, sounds and rhymes and mark making materials are available on the writing table.

Children have access to a varied range of equipment and resources in the role play area that stimulates their imaginations well and they learn about the world around them as they use meal sets from the Orient and Asia. They also have access to a wide selection of programmable equipment such as a cash till, telephones and VTech lap tops. Children learn to respect and celebrate diversity when they participate in activities featuring Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Staff interact well with the children, asking questions that help them to extend their learning. They make themselves available to work with individual children at activities and often attract a small group of children when they sit on the table to use ECAT resources. Staff deliver adult-led activities such as dancing to Spanish

music, which also promotes children's physical development.

Children are making good progress in their learning and development. Staff implement the Early Years Foundation Stage framework effectively, completing planning which detail activities across all areas of learning. Children have access to an effective balance of adult-led and child initiated activities, which allows them to follow their interests and ideas both inside and outdoors. Regular observations and assessments are regularly completed on all children. These form part of their individual learning folders. Some files clearly identify children's future learning goals and inform planning. However, this is not the case for all children. Next steps do not yet clearly link into all the learning areas and early learning goals to monitor children's progress to identify and plan for gaps in their individual learning.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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