

The Ark Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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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*.

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Description of the setting

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 open Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions last from 9:30am to 12:00pm. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register 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 can support children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

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 overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff provide a warm and caring environment where children's individuality is valued in a traditional pre-school. Staff follow well-established procedures and planning which ensures they provide a suitable range of activities that help the children make steady progress in their learning and development. Positive partnerships with parents provide good support to the pre-school staff and keep them well informed of their children's progress and development. Staff are committed to continual professional development as they complete higher level qualifications. However, this is not used to full effect to monitor and evaluate the provision, make changes or to improve outcomes for children. Leadership and management systems are not effectively implemented in a timely manner to ensure the setting meets all welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Risk assessment records are not regularly reviewed and this is a legal requirement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of risk assessments stating when it was carried out and by whom and any action taken following a review (Documentation) 02/07/2010

- develop robust systems to keep a record of when Criminal Record Bureau checks are completed for staff and committee (Suitable People)

02/07/2010

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

- ensure children have access to sufficient toilet facilities to ensure their comfort and privacy
- improve hygiene with regard to hand-washing procedures
- improve staff skills and knowledge of the early learning goals in order to use observations more effectively to plan next steps in children's learning
- improve educational programmes by enabling children to have greater access to non-fiction books and free access to an enhanced range of creative materials in order to develop their own imagination and creativity
- improve systems to ensure an accurate record is kept for all adults and visitors on the premises including parent helpers
- develop effective systems to notify Ofsted of changes to the registered person in a more timely manner in order for checks to be completed effectively so children are safeguarded
- improve systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the provision, by using the Ofsted online self-evaluation form for example, in order to continually improve all aspects of the provision by identifying strengths and area for improvement, with an action plan for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded in a satisfactory manner as staff show a good understanding of safeguarding issues and their responsibilities, and attend regular training to update their knowledge. The management team review and implement policies and procedures that protect most aspects of children's safety. Daily checks ensure the premises and resources are safe and suitable for use. However, risk assessments are not regularly reviewed which does not meet requirements of registration. They do not identify all risks, such as the doors to the outdoor area, which could trap fingers as they blow in the wind. Children stay safe as they are closely supervised and are escorted to the toilet. Staff are warm, caring and well qualified, and there are suitable systems in place to vet staff to ensure they are suitable to work with the children. Staff provide good support for one another as they care for the children. Systems to notify changes to the committee to Ofsted are not completed in a timely manner and so checks are not completed effectively to ensure children are safeguarded. Records of staff checks are in place but the list of criminal record bureau checks for the committee are not readily available. This has limited impact on the children as they do not work directly with the children. Staff do not ensure all visitors including parent helpers complete the visitors' book so there is not an accurate record of adults on the premises.

The setting shows a satisfactory commitment to continual development. Staff have begun to evaluate their provision and identify some areas needing improvement,

such as observation, assessments and planning. They successfully introduce some changes that benefit the children, such as new activity planning sheets and communication systems for parents, identified through a parent questionnaire. Staff continue their professional development through attending training, and all hold relevant childcare qualifications to level 3 and some have completed higher level qualifications. But this is not used fully to identify and improve all aspects of the setting. Most recommendations set at the previous inspection have been effectively acted upon. However, staff have not improved systems to ensure children's privacy as they use the toilet. They do not ensure there are sufficient toilet facilities available for the children when they do not open up the second toilet. Paper towels are not always available so children have to use a communal towel.

Staff develop effective links with parents who are happy with the provision, taking time to express their positive views. Parents feel staff support their children's care and development well and find them friendly and approachable. Parents get to know the staff during introductory visits and speak to them daily at handover. They gain an insight into their children's time at pre-school through the extremely well supported parent helper rota. They are invited to meetings with their child's key carer to discuss their children's progress. This helps them build on children's learning at home. Staff are aware of the need to develop links with others in order to support continuity for the children. Children visit the local school prior to joining in order to help their transition.

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

Staff provide a warm, caring environment where children play and learn happily. They know the children well and interact with them during activities, which helps extend their knowledge and development. Staff use the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and practice guidance to provide a range of activities that support children's progress in all areas of children's learning and development. They use their written observations to plan for children's learning though sometimes they do not show links to the early learning goals and are not covered in a systematic way to ensure all areas are covered as some staff lack confidence in using the framework. Children show perseverance as they explore a suitable range of materials indoors and out including when threading items onto laces. They learn about healthy eating as they make fruit salad. Staff extend their learning as they use effective questioning techniques to increase their skills in counting and naming shapes such as circles.

Staff set up outdoor areas to provide a wide range of learning opportunities which children freely access in good weather. Children engage in energetic activities as they use the parachute and wheeled toys and run around and kick balls. There is an emphasis on free play within the pre-school, and children busily and happily engage themselves in activities. They show independence as they make free choices about their play. Small group activities encourage children's skills in a more structured way as they play lotto and listening games. Children access a wide range of equipment, including recycled resources in their creative activities.

However, staff do not always ensure there is a wide range of creative materials easily accessible to the children so they can create from their own imaginations at all times. While children enjoy listening to stories and have access to a good range of books, staff do not ensure there is a wide range of non-fiction books available on a daily basis.

Children behave well and show concern for one another as they play together. Staff are consistent and children respond well to their requests. Children show they have a sense of belonging and that they feel safe and secure with staff as they interact with them confidently or ask them for a cuddle. Children learn to recognise similarities and differences through activities that reflect other cultures and religions. Children learn to play safely as staff remind them of the reasons for rules, such as why not to throw toys, and to use tools safely when cutting fruit. They learn to identify and manage risk, such as when riding on wheeled toys outside without colliding.

Children enjoy healthy snacks of toast and marmite. But staff do not effectively encourage children's independence as they do not spread their own toast or pour their own drinks. Staff plan cooking and food activities and sometimes children grow vegetables which encourages their understanding of healthy eating. Children enjoy the fresh air as they play outside in all weathers and participate in large movement sessions with parachutes for example, that encourage awareness of their bodies. This helps children develop very clear understanding of healthy lifestyles. Children learn good hygiene as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack, however, the use of a communal water bowl and towel increases the risk of cross infection.

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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	3
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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