

The Ark - After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY406158

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24/06/2010

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).

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.

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Description of the setting

The Ark - After School Club registered in 2010. It operates from residential premises on a housing estate in Andover. The club is run by Andover and District Mencap and is one of four out of school clubs run by the same provider. Children have access to five rooms within the house on the ground floor and an enclosed outdoor play area is available.

The club operates term time only from 3pm to 6pm. A maximum of 10 children under eight may attend the setting at any one time, of whom, no more than five may be in the early years range. Currently there are 45 children on roll, one of whom is in the early years age range. All of the children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The provision is also registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Mencap employ a children's services manager to line manage the group and a leader who is in day to day charge of the club. A team of seven staff in total work with the children. Three staff hold a relevant level 2 qualification and three staff are working towards relevant qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and works in partnership with other agencies.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed, happy and receive attentive support from the kind and sympathetic staff at the after school club. The staff are experienced practitioners of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities but are not very knowledgeable about the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan and organise play activities which take account of children's specific needs but do not effectively promote all areas of play and learning, during each session. The setting has built a very good partnership with parents and is building on its links with other Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners, who also care for the children. Staff at the newly registered setting have started to evaluate its practices, but there are not yet clear points for development to ensure good continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs as they progress towards the early learning goals (Organisation) 24/07/2010

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

- ensure staff training includes meeting and putting into practice the requirements and statutory guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- create a stimulating environment that offers a range of activities and quality play resources which will encourage children's interest and curiosity both indoors and out
- develop self-evaluation through discussion with staff to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are suitably safeguarded. There is a child protection procedure in place and all the staff are confident about implementing it should they have any child protection concerns. The registered provider has a good system to ensure that all adults are suitably vetted which includes gaining a Criminal Records Bureau check. High ratios mean that children are supervised well by the staff and given a lot of attention. Appropriate checks and risk assessments are carried out on the areas used by children. A range of policies and procedures are in place and are shared with parents. The club staff organise the environment so children can make some choices in their play. For example, a pictorial board of toy resources is available in the lounge for the non-verbal children to make choices, while others verbalise their toy choices to the practitioners. The practitioners then get out the toy resources from the cupboard for the children. This does not effectively promote personal independence and is not in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage good practice. The garden fence is brightly coloured and welcomes children into the garden to experience outdoor play. Children enjoy playing traditional games with the staff, and can play in the water trough outdoors. However, the play house and outdoor play space is not used effectively to create a stimulating play environment, covering all areas of learning.

Very good communication with parents takes place on a day to day basis to ensure the staff are aware of the children's very specific care and learning needs. Parents speak very highly of the setting and of the staff who offer a flexible service to their parents. Documentation regarding children's special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent with lots of information about each unique child being gathered. The setting has started to liaise with the nursery the children attend, gaining information about children's special educational needs but not about other areas of learning that they enjoy and excel at. The sharing of information on observational assessment, to ensure progression through the steps to the early learning goals is minimal. This is because the staff have not started to observe and assess all aspects of the child's play and learning. They observe, predominately, the area a child has difficulty in. Staff undertake good mandatory training on important matters such as health and safety and safeguarding, but training on the Early Years Foundation Stage is minimal and not part of the induction of staff. The club is going through a change of leader and this is having an impact on how the setting evaluates its practices; there is not yet a person to 'head up' the team and drive improvement. The setting has started to fundraise, but have not yet

introduced well-targeted plans for future improvement which link in with the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Children very much enjoy coming to the club and arrive with a keen attitude, wanting to be a part of the setting. They demonstrate they have a very good relationship with the staff. Children laugh with the adults as they play games of chase in the garden and relate to them well, using speech and language appropriately. The staff do a good job of entertaining the children because of the high ratios and the patient, sympathetic and attentive care they give to them. However, the quality of the play resources and activities on offer to the children is lacking. For example, three-year-old children verbalise excitedly as they play with staff hiding in the play house and then come out as part of their game. But the play house is full of jumbled up play resources and does not include quality role play resources for children and staff to act out real experiences to in turn develop their creativity. They do have, however, the opportunity if they wish, to make their own pizza on pita bread with a variety of toppings with an adult in the kitchen. Children enjoy running in the garden and pedalling skilfully on a tricycle exerting their energy in the fresh air, developing their physical skills. They rock on the rocker and invite the member of staff who is closely on hand to join them.

Children enjoy taking part in songs when a member of staff spontaneously sings and signs the frog song. They excitedly say 'again, again' to the member of staff and other child, and join in with the words, clapping and signs for the song, sitting together in the garden in a small group. However, there is no extension of the play by the adult, for example, talking about frogs, looking at books with frogs in, or looking for creatures and mini beats in the garden which has recently been planted with shrubs and flowers, to in turn promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children happily join a large group at tea-time, sitting down at the table after washing their hands. They are supported well by the staff to spread on their jam and to cut up their pita bread. Children sit for a few minutes but due to the nature of their difficulties with food and social times, become restless and want to get down and play. Staff encourage them to sit longer but after resistance from the children, they realise the aim of joining in a group time has been achieved, if only for a short time, and allow the children to get down and freely play.

Staff undertake observational assessment of the children in relation to their special educational needs but not of the whole child's development, to enable effective play activities to be planned. This does not fully meet the legal requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are very in tune with children's specific medical needs and are trained to meet these care needs. Children have privacy during nappy changing in a large designated disabled bathroom and staff operate a hygienic routine to minimise cross infection. Staff talk to children about keeping safe such as not climbing on the hand rail in the garden and are kept safe when they walk to the park. Staff choose the safest route and use buggies and wrist straps to minimise the risk and keep them close to hand. Children behave well at

the club and staff quickly get to know the best way to handle undesirable behaviour. Children have a behavioural therapist and a social worker who visit the setting to give advice to the staff on matters such as behavioural strategies.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
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	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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