



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 254587

DfES Number: 519757

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/02/2004
Inspector Name Alison Putnar

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Ark Day Nursery
Setting Address 1 Vickers Street
Mapperley Park
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG3 4LD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Janet Kerry

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Ark Day Nursery opened in 1982. It operates from a converted detached Victorian house in the Mapperley Park area of Nottingham. The nursery serves a wide area and the intake of children represents a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups.

There are currently 53 children from 0 to 8 years on roll. This includes 8 funded 3-year-olds and 1 funded 4-year-old. None of the children have special educational needs, 2 are at an early stage of learning English. Children attend both full and part-time sessions, after school care is also provided. Children are cared for in groups according to their age and ability. There are 2 enclosed outdoor areas, which include surfaces of grass, tarmac and astro turf.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00, throughout the year closing only for bank holidays.

The majority of staff hold relevant childcare qualifications, with others working towards them. The nursery accesses additional training and support from the Nottingham City Council Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Ark Day Nursery provides good quality care for children. The clear management structure and effective deployment of qualified staff provides support to those less experienced. Good opportunities are provided for these staff to observe and develop their childcare practises. Staff are fully aware of the comprehensive policies and procedures, which underpin the smooth day-to-day running. A welcoming environment is provided; staff warmly greet children and parents. All areas are well maintained. Good ranges of age appropriate toys are presented in each group room, encouraging children to settle quickly as parents leave.

Activities are planned for all ages including the after school provision, offering a

good balance and variety on the whole. Children are encouraged to make progress in their development as they learn through play. Throughout the day children are grouped effectively for the majority of the time, enabling staff to provide suitable activities that sustain children's interest. Flexible routines provide opportunities for children to sleep, eat and play regularly, although the organisation of sleep time for toddlers is not always effective. Fewer opportunities are created for younger, mobile children to play outdoors.

Safety is a high priority in the setting, effective security systems are in place and staff supervise children well to ensure the risk of accidents occurring are minimised. Playrooms are comfortable, equipped with high quality furnishings, and all but one, maintained to a suitable temperature. Children's health and well-being is well fostered through staff's clear knowledge of the health and safety policies and procedures.

Staff have developed good communication systems with parents. Useful information is provided through brochures, displays and access to nursery policies. Staff obtain relevant information ensuring children are cared for according to their individual needs and in line with parents' wishes.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Clear induction procedures and comprehensive policies ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are able to carry these out competently.
- Staff demonstrate good hygiene practise to maintain a clean and suitable environment for young children. They encourage this appropriately with children through daily routines, for example, washing hands in preparation for meal times.
- The plentiful range of equipment in the baby room ensures all children's individual needs are met, babies are fed and settled to sleep in staff's arms before being placed safely in cots. The comfortable seating and sofa creates a homely atmosphere.
- High adult-to-child ratios ensure children receive positive interaction and individual attention and care as required.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to access and play outdoors enabling them to benefit from the fresh air and wider experiences of large physical play
- organisation of sleep time and activities during this time for children aged 18 months to 3 years. Ensuring that activities provided engage and sustain older

children's interest, also improving opportunities for younger children in this room to sleep peacefully

- systems of maintaining a suitable temperature in the after school care room.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
3	Review the effectiveness of the daily routines with regard to providing regular opportunities for children to play outdoors, and the organisation of sleep time in the toddler room (children aged 18 months to 3 years).
4	Improve the current system of maintaining a suitable temperature in the after school room.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The Ark Day Nursery provides good quality education where children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They make very good progress in their personal social and emotional development. Effective systems are in place to support children with special educational needs. Those learning English as an additional language are consistently supported in all aspects of the curriculum.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Senior staff are knowledgeable about the early learning goals and plan an interesting range of activities for children. However, not all staff contribute to planning, leading to missed opportunities to incorporate their ideas and knowledge of children's interests. Staff promote children's communication skills, independence and creativity well through the wealth of activities provided. Many opportunities are provided for children to freely select and make choices during the day. Staff develop children's understanding of early maths and literacy during focused group activities but are less confident in incorporating these into practical activities. New assessment records have been introduced. Staff record where children are at in their learning, however do not always use these effectively to inform future planning, ensuring activities appropriately challenge all children.

The leadership and management in the setting is generally good. The pre-school coordinator and staff meet regularly to discuss and evaluate the education provision, implementing changes for improvement. Training is encouraged and accessed when staffing ratios allow. The facility are committed to developing the education provision through support and advice from relevant professionals.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Good relationships have been developed. Systems are in place to involve parents in some aspects of their children's learning. Assessment records are shared although parents have limited opportunities to contribute to these.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. These young children are confident and well behaved.
- Staff's provision of a wide range of creative, sensory activities engage children's interests and encourage them to be active and learn through free exploration.
- Senior staff's ability to support younger children, and those at an early stage of learning English, in developing their communication skills, through appropriate use of gestures, simple language and open ended questions.

What needs to be improved?

- some staff's knowledge of the early learning goals and their confidence in extending children's learning, particularly in the areas of maths and literacy, through their own interaction and involvement in children's play
- planning systems, enabling all staff to contribute to plans for future activities, sharing ideas and their knowledge of children's interests
- staff's use of children's development assessments to inform future planning, ensuring activities provided help all children to make progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made generally good progress since the last inspection. They have addressed the key issue raised, which was to develop a system for the identification and assessment of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). A special educational needs policy has been developed, in line with the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) special educational needs Code of Practice (2001). This is reviewed and updated regularly. A Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has been identified in the nursery. Her role is to develop the support and education provision for children with special educational needs, working closely with parents and relevant professionals to meet children's needs effectively. Staff have worked with advisory teachers from the local education authority to develop their skills and continue to apply for relevant training. These systems ensure that all children are fully included in all aspects of the nursery activities and encouraged to reach their full potential.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy and confident when separating from their adult carers. Many show increasing independence when selecting activities, while younger children appropriately seek support from staff. Younger children are developing skills of sharing and turn taking, while older ones have developed good relationships and invite others to play with them in small groups. They are aware of the expectations in the nursery and are polite and respectful towards their peers and the staff.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Younger children are developing good communication skills, they use gestures and simple words when interacting with others. Older children use a widening range of vocabulary when talking about real and imagined events. Children enjoy listening to stories read by staff and join in with familiar words. Many are able to recognise their names, although they do not often link sounds to the letters in their name. Children have good pencil control, many attempt to make marks at the writing table.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Older children are able to count objects to 10 and some recognise numerals for example when looking at the date. Younger children rarely show an interest in counting or use simple mathematical language during play. They learn mathematical concepts such as size and shape during focused group activities but seldom practise this during practical play situations, for example when counting objects made in the dough, comparing size and shape.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to explore materials using all of their senses, they feel textures and observe change during cooking activities and when growing seeds. They select appropriate tools when using their ideas to cut and join with recyclable materials. Many demonstrate their understanding of technology when using the computer and programmable toys in role play. They develop a sense of time as they recall events in their own lives and learn about the lives of others during topics.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use a wide range of tools and resources to develop their hand-eye coordination, manipulating scissors and drawing implements with control and skill. Outdoors they experience moving in a variety of ways, jumping, running and hopping during games of follow my leader. They develop an awareness of space when using bikes, tunnels and climbing equipment. Children show their knowledge of health and bodily awareness when discussing healthy eating and through managing their own personal hygiene.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use their own imagination to create pictures and models with a wide range of craft materials. They listen to and sing children's songs but have not yet explored different types of music. Children use instruments to explore sound and enjoy pretending to be in a marching band. Younger children play imaginatively with toys, such as farm animals, and recreate familiar scenes. Older children share their ideas in groups, for example, when being the vet and pet owner in the role play area.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- develop staff's knowledge of the early learning goals to build their confidence and skills of extending children's learning during practical free play situations, particularly in the areas of mathematics and early literacy
- improve systems of planning activities, taking account of children's individual interests and information gained from assessments of where children are in their learning, thus ensuring activities have purpose and provide challenge for all children.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.