



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 119271

DfES Number: 530006

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 19/11/2003
Inspector Name Elizabeth, Claire Price

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name The Ark Pre-School
Setting Address 144 High Street
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG45 7AT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Ark Pre-school

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Ark Pre-school
Address 144 High Street
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG45 7AT

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 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 and caters for children aged between two and five years old. There are currently 18 children on roll. This includes ten funded three-year old children and eight funded four-year olds. The group caters for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions last from 09:30am to 12:00 noon from Monday to Friday.

There are currently five members of staff including the supervisor and deputy all working part-time. Three members of staff are qualified to level three.

The pre-school is managed by the church committee and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

The Ark Pre-School provides good quality care for children. The staff are well organised and operate a high adult to child ratio, which enables close attention to the children's needs. An induction process is followed and staff are encouraged to undertake training. Toys and resources provide a good range for the children attending. All resources are readily available to children for self-selection with free access to alternatives. Most documentation is available although some required elements are not included.

Staff give high priority to children's safety and carry out regular checks to ensure children's health and safety. Staff will ensure the collection procedures at the end of the session prevent unobserved exit by children. Children are encouraged to be

aware of personal hygiene and develop independence in their personal care. Parents and children's preferences are observed and healthy and nutritious snacks with drinks are provided. The staff team provides good support for children with additional needs and all children are treated with equal concern.

The staff organise and plan a good range of interesting and stimulating activities for the children. The children approach adults readily for help and information and co-operate well with staff and each other. Staff interact well with the children and respond promptly to their requests. Key worker staff record observations of children's play and learning, which support developmental records. Staff are consistent and caring, using praise and encouragement appropriately and are effective in managing children's behaviour.

Parents are welcomed in the group and encouraged to discuss their child's progress with staff. Daily verbal feedback and termly appointments are provided, and parents are encouraged to view their child's record. Parents have access to policies and procedures at registration and in the pre-school and they receive an informative prospectus.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a good range of interesting and stimulating activities for the children. They are well organised and work well as a team which ensures the smooth flow of the session and enables good support for the children and close attention to their needs.
- Staff are consistent and caring and have effective strategies for managing children's behaviour. This enables children to feel secure, They are well behaved, co-operative and responsive to staff requests.
- Staff provide close attention to children's individual needs and ensure all children are treated with equal concern. Children are well supported and confident in the group.
- The partnership with parents works well and good relationships are developed. Parents feel welcome and involved in their child's care. Verbal feedback is available on a regular basis and parents can speak to their child's key worker to discuss any concerns or requests for information. The parents' committee is an integral part of the smooth running of the group.

What needs to be improved?

- the collection procedures at the end of the session to ensure children are not able to leave unobserved
- the recording of medication to ensure clear written consent for administration

of medicines and confidentiality of medicine records

- the attendance register to show the presence of visitors and members of staff, together with staff contact details.

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
6	Make sure that collection procedures prevent children leaving unless supervised
7	Ensure all records of medication for children are kept confidential and clear written parental consent is available
14	Ensure the register of attendance includes the presence of visitors and staff on the premises and has contact details for all staff

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Ark Pre-School offers good quality provision, which helps children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children have positive attitudes to learning and progress through a wide range of resources and activities available to them. Children make generally good progress in all six areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the foundation stage shown by the activities planned and observed, and through discussions with staff. Curriculum planning is under development and does not currently provide sufficient information to ensure all areas are covered. The strengths in the six areas arise from the high level of interaction, conversation with the children and the range of planned activities. Observations of children's learning are recorded, although these do not include details of a child's developmental needs or plans for their progress. Staff have effective strategies to manage children's behaviour and encourage children to share and co-operate. Relationships between staff and children are very good. There are effective strategies in place to support children with a special educational need or English as an additional language.

Leadership and management are generally good. The committee and staff work well as a team and are committed to ongoing development of staff and continued improvement in the quality of education provided. The staff value the support of the committee.

The partnership with parents is good and contributes to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are kept informed both verbally and by written record of development, about their child's time at pre-school, their activities and progress. They are encouraged to involve themselves and share observations with staff and are welcome to discuss their child's progress with the key worker.

What is being done well?

- Children show good concentration skills and express their needs and ideas well to adults. They have developing independence skills which are encouraged by staff and they are well motivated to experience the activities on offer.
- Staff manage behaviour very well and reinforce the boundaries and encourage respect for each other. They show consistent interest and involve themselves in children's play at their level.
- Staff use appropriate praise and encouragement to develop children's confidence in their ability and promote self esteem. They provide a high level of interaction with the children and develop good relationships which encourage children to co-operate.

- The partnership with parents is good and contributes towards the progress children make towards the early learning goals.

What needs to be improved?

- planning to provide information to ensure all areas of learning are addressed and activities are included to extend more able children
- access to tools and resources to allow children more opportunities to practise emergent writing skills and enhance their learning in creative and physical play
- the organisation and planning of the book area to promote self selection and enjoyment of books.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection when three key issues were raised. These have mostly been addressed.

Staff have all undertaken special educational needs training and a member of staff has been appointed who provides feedback on any courses she attends. Physical activities now provide more variety and additional equipment is used to create obstacles. Planning also shows the introduction of games for variations of movement. Curriculum planning is still in development and does not provide sufficient detail to ensure all the areas are covered. Detail of activities and actions needed to extend more able children are still to be included.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show good concentration skills and express their needs and ideas well to adults. They have developing independence skills which are fostered by staff and they are well motivated to experience the activities on offer. Children co-operate well with staff ,help to tidy at changes of activity and respond to staff requests.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have confidence in their use of language and use a wide vocabulary. They engage easily in conversation with each other and adults. Children are confident in finding their name cards and recognise some other familiar words, however they seldom utilise the book area during the session. Insufficient opportunities are provided for children to practise emergent writing skills or use writing for a variety of purposes for example making lists.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are able to count up to and beyond ten and most recognise numerals up to and beyond nine. They use numbers in everyday situations and show that they understand size, shape and space through practical activities. There are missed opportunities to utilise planned activities to promote further learning, for example in a height activity. Staff use questioning effectively to extend children's thinking and assess their understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children talk confidently about personal events in their own lives and have a growing awareness of other cultures and traditions. They are confident in their use of the computer, mouse and programs. A good range of activities promotes children's awareness of the environment and the world they live in. Staff do not utilise available opportunities to develop children's investigation and observational skills associated with the activity, for example real leaves to copy for the height tree.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show good co-ordination and spatial awareness in physical development. They are confident in their personal care and have an awareness of basic health and hygiene. Children have regular access to an outdoor play area and a variety of large and small equipment used to develop their physical skills. A range of tools to promote control of large and small movements is not readily accessible to children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children experience a good range of resources and activities which enable them to develop their creative skills. They are enthusiastic and enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, matching movements to the rhythm of the music. There are missed opportunities for children to develop creative skills for example drawing leaves and cutting them out for the height chart. Staff support children well and provide assistance when needed or requested.

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 curriculum planning to ensure all areas of learning are addressed and activities are included to extend more able children
- provide children with improved access to tools and resources which allow more opportunity to develop emergent writing skills and promote development of physical and creative play
- promote children's self selection of books and use of the book corner .

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.