

# Ark in the Park

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 05/02/2011  
**Inspector** Anne-Marie Moyse

**Setting address** 20 Keyberry Park, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1BZ

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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

Ark in the Park is a privately owned day nursery that opened in 2001. It operates from a large Victorian property situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Newton Abbot. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, where they also have supervised access to two donkeys.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 78 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 132 children aged under five years on roll. The nursery receives funding for nursery education for three and four-year-olds. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.00am to 6.00pm for 51 weeks of the year. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 27 members of staff employed to work directly with the children, of whom 13 hold a relevant level 3 qualification, with most other staff qualified to level 2. The manager holds Qualified Teacher Status and one other member of staff holds a relevant level 6 qualification. The nursery also employ a Chef and assistant cook, and an administrator.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed to the nursery by the friendly staff. Through the positive relationships formed with parents, children's individual needs and routines are well understood and promoted. The children access a bright and highly stimulating environment which is very safe and secure. Overall, all systems are in place to support children's learning and development effectively. The nursery employs various systems to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses but do not always implement improvements promptly. They demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop further systems to observe and record children's progress to inform the planning of appropriate play and learning experiences which reflective children's current interests
- improve the systems of self-evaluation to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children and include systems for supporting staff's continual professional development

- provide children with sufficient time, space and encouragement to discover and use new words and mathematical ideas, concepts and language during child-initiated activities in their own play

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Health and safety are given high priority and clear systems are in place regarding safeguarding. The spacious premises are well organised and resources are effectively deployed. The nursery makes good use of the garden area, and provide children with stimulating and challenging resources. Each room is well organised with their own bathroom and or sleep areas to promote independence. High quality, safe resources are readily available for children to access according to their age and stage of development. Children's photographs are displayed all around the nursery and provide children with a sense of belonging. Large photographs of children with disabilities and other countries and cultures promote an awareness of diversity. All staff understand their responsibility in conducting daily checks and minimising hazards to children. Detailed risk assessments are used effectively to assess the suitability of the premises and when children go on outings. In the garden staff are deployed and prioritise the supervision of the large equipment for children's safety, however, this impacts on the interaction with the children to help extend their learning and understanding during their own play. Staff understand their role and responsibility in following the procedures in place should they have any concerns over a child's welfare. All staff undergo rigorous checks on their suitability to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Appraisal systems are in place to review staff suitability and their understanding of roles and responsibilities. However, not all staff are fully encouraged to continue their professional development and access training to extend their understanding of current good practice. The nursery provide in-house training for some courses, such as first aid, ensuring all staff are suitably qualified to act in an emergency situation.

The nursery staff conduct formal observations of children on a rota basis, from which they identify children's next steps in their development. Some spontaneous achievements are also recorded and used to create a learning journal. The key person develops a formal programme for each child around their interests, covering all areas of learning monitoring this to ensure all strands are covered. However, staff do not promptly record and adapt the plans to respond to children's ever changing interests. The plans do not always provide support and guidance to other staff on how they can best support each child during their play, which is useful when staff are not consistently working with the same group of children. Children's progress is attractively recorded in their 'Special Books' where photographs are annotated, and samples of children work is collated to give a interesting account of their time spent at nursery for parents and the children.

Self-evaluation process are in place, including support from the local authority which are used effectively to drive improvement and develop the provision. The setting are aware of some weaknesses which they are working to improve but it is taking time to fully implement changes. Policies and procedures have been

updated to reflect the recent changes in staff and the operation procedures for the nursery. However, some displays and information provided for parents is not promptly amended or clearly communicated to keep everyone well informed. There are some highly effective systems in place to exchange information between parents and staff on a daily basis. Comprehensive accounts of children's home routines and interests are obtained when children enter the nursery and are updated regularly. Parents receive daily written accounts and practical details are thoroughly recorded for the youngest children, in addition to the verbal exchanges with the staff. As a result staff know and support children's changing needs continually. Links with other professional agencies are in place to support each child's specific needs. The staff recognise the need to liaise with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage if children attend other settings. Transition documents are provided for children who are moving onto school or other provision to share useful information on each child's learning and development.

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

Children are very happy to attend the nursery and separate well from parents. They have formed good close relationships with the staff and others at the setting. Children are developing their independence and confidence as they move around the nursery and interact with the various age groups attending. Children are respectful and understand the rules of the setting, sitting well at meal times and with appropriate use of manners and developing social skills.

The youngest babies are very sensitively cared for. Consistent staff bond well with them, offering lots of reassuring cuddles and reacting promptly to their needs. Babies routines are known and highly effectively supported, with their needs central to the organisation of the room and resources. Babies sensory develop is promoted through a range of high quality toys and resources and interacting activities such as water play and treasure basket activities. Staff are calm, relaxed and confidently cope with each child's differing needs. Once mobile, babies move to a different room where resources and activities are more challenging and suited to their needs. Activities provided continue children's sensory development and various textures and materials are on offer, including lots of messy play. Babies are encouraged to explore painting the windows, watching the changes in colours as the paint mixes and the feel of it on their hands. Unavoidably, access to the garden for the whole nursery, is through the older baby room, which does impact on the cleanliness of the environment as well as regular disruption to the group. Older children are cared for on rooms on the first and second floor, with children learning how to safely use the stairs, and regular evacuation processes familiarise the children with the use of the external fire routes.

Children access the outdoor area as a whole group, as much as possible, benefitting from regular exercise and fresh air regardless of the weather. The extensive garden has a wealth of equipment and resources to promote all areas of learning, including visits to care for the donkeys and collect eggs from the chickens. Large fixed climbing apparatus supports children's physical development

and their ability to assess their own risks. A newly created bark area helps children to safely balance on planks and tyres. Children cooperate and work together to explore how their weight alters the levels, creating a see-saw effect. However, staff tend to prioritise children's safety and do not always become involved in children's play to extend their understanding or develop new concepts or language. Other children dig and develop their imagination as they play in the sand pits, or with the water trays. A willow den provides a stimulating area where stories and role play is created. Books are available in the sheds and some activities are brought to the outside area to promote mark making or creative development. A mixture of flour and oil provides a medium where children can mould, stir and manipulate materials to promote spatial awareness and control. Regularly all the children play outside together which provides good opportunities for siblings and older children to meet and play together and develop a respect for their differences. However, this limits older children's ability to play robustly in fear of bumping into the younger, less steady children in certain areas.

Children's health is further promoted by the varied and nutritious meals, cooked freshly onsite. All children's dietary needs are well known and respected with different meals prepared for the babies if required. Children are encouraged to extend their tastes and textures as they are offered a wide variety of choice, for example, at tea time five different sandwich fillings are offered with additional sauces and pickles added to suit each child's preferences. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables provide a balanced diet. Water is freely available and regularly promoted to the children, especially when playing outside. Children know to keep their heads covered and that they have sun cream on their skin to protect them from the sun. Overall, children are developing their inquisitiveness and motivation to learn, they ask interesting questions and are making connections in their 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

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|--|---|
| <b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b> | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 2 |

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>            | 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 | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 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

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