

# The Ark

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

133627

**Inspection date**

27/09/2011

**Inspector**

Deborah Schindler

**Setting address**

The Orchard, Birds Lane, Epwell, Banbury, Oxfordshire,  
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**Telephone number**

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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**

The Ark nursery opened in 1997 and is a privately owned nursery set in the rural village of Epwell near Banbury in Oxfordshire. It operates from purpose-built premises with its own enclosed, outdoor area near to the proprietor's premises and the children also have use of her garden. A maximum of twenty children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 9am to 4pm during term times for approximately 48 weeks of the year. There are currently 27 children aged from two years to under eight years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and from surrounding villages. The nursery employs five members of staff to work alongside the owner-manager. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and extremely enthusiastic learners who make good progress. Their individual needs are met because staff work closely with parents and observation and assessment procedures are effective. Excellent use of resources, both inside and outside, support children's learning and development. Children's welfare is promoted well through carefully implemented policies and procedures. The staff team is extremely well motivated; they generally evaluate what they do well and set clear targets for improvement and future development.

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

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

- develop risk assessments to cover anything with which a child may come into contact
- extend the engagement with parents by developing the different ways for gathering their views on the provision, in order to further improve evaluation of the nursery.

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

Safeguarding procedures are robust overall and underpin the safe care of the children. Senior staff have recently attended relevant training and check that all staff have a good understanding of how to implement relevant policies and procedures. The nursery is secure and a risk assessment is in place, although this does not cover anything with which a child comes into contact, in order to increase

children's safety and reduce hazards. Children are cared for by staff who are checked as being suitable to be employed to work with them through good staff appointment processes.

Children enjoy the care and support of a strong team of staff who work together effectively. They benefit from plenty of individual attention and from the high quality interactions that take place between the adults and children. Two members of staff are currently studying for degrees, increasing their knowledge and expertise. This expertise has a very positive effect on the quality of the provision. Children use an excellent range of resources both indoors and outside. The nursery makes full use of the limited space to offer children stimulating experiences. The environment is vibrant and motivates the children helping them to make good progress. The resources available include ones to support children's awareness of other cultures and the wider world.

The manager has a very clear vision for the future development of the nursery. Staff are very well motivated and morale is exceptionally high. Staff are involved in the self evaluation process, and children make a very positive contribution to choosing their experiences. Parents voice their opinions but the system is not extended to include other methods of feedback. There are close links with other settings and clear transition arrangements, so that moves from one provision to another are eased. Parents speak very highly of the nursery. There are effective two way communications. Parents are kept well informed through displays, notice boards and daily feedback where they exchange information. There are good relationships between parents and staff. Staff have a good understanding of children's backgrounds and can meet their particular needs.

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

Children settle very well in the friendly and supportive environment. They make good progress because staff know their interests and use these to plan and provide a good balance of opportunities for free play and more structured activities. For example, staff observed an interest in worms and so provided opportunities for this to be developed further. Observations, assessment and planning are closely monitored and an effective new system is in place. Children are motivated to learn and as a result, develop skills for the future.

Children enjoy engaging in activities such as singing, painting and story time. They have opportunities to develop early writing skills, such as writing their names on the board for registration. Children learn about shape, colours, positional language and numbers through everyday activities and displays. Children make a display about 'My family' and enjoy counting members of their family.

Children develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They spend plenty of time outside every day because staff organise the provision so that children can choose whether to play indoors or outside. The outside area is well equipped and offers opportunities for climbing, digging, riding tricycles, making dens and growing fruit and vegetables. This also extends their awareness of healthy eating as the children eat what they grow. Healthy snacks are offered to the children each day and staff

discuss the benefits of healthy eating during relevant activities. The children develop self help skills and confidence in using tools safely by helping to prepare the snack, enjoying taking on such responsibilities.. Mealtimes serve as social occasions where children talk to staff about things that are important to them and help to develop their conversation skills.

Children learn about their local community through first hand experiences. They attend events such as Harvest Festival at the church and a Nativity Play at the local school. They also develop a good knowledge of the world around them through activities such as pretending to play 'shops' and digging in the garden. Resources are kept at children's level with clear labelling to enable the children to make choices about their play. Children are exceptionally confident and enthusiastic learners. Their behaviour is exemplary and they co-operate extremely well with each other, for example by deciding how to share the tricycles. There is good interaction between staff and children and this promotes the children's self esteem, resulting in the children feeling safe and secure in the setting.

## 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

<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

<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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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

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

<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	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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