

The Ark Association Ltd (2)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY439865
Inspection date	22/05/2012
Inspector	Janice Walker

Setting address	C/O Oakham C of E Primary School, Burley Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7GY
Telephone number	01572770121
Email	mary@the-ark.org.uk
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Ark Association Ltd (2) is one of four provisions run by the same management group. It opened in 1991 and was re-registered following a move to new premises and then becoming a limited company in 2011. It operates from a designated area with its own entrance within Oakham C of E primary School. Children are cared for in one room and there are adjoining bathroom and kitchen facilities. There is a fully enclosed adjoining area available for outdoor play and the setting also have shared use of a further outdoor area.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. Care is also provided for children before and after school up to the age of 11 years. There are currently 47 children on roll in the nursery provision. Funded early education for two, three- and four-year-olds is provided. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision offers two services, the nursery and the out of school care provision. Opening times for the nursery are 9am to 3.25pm. Children can attend for flexible times depending on individual family needs. The nursery operates during school term times only. The out of school provision serves children who attend the on-site school and the near-by English Martyrs Catholic School. This provision operates from 7.30am to 9am and 3.30pm to 6pm during school term times. During school holidays, apart from Christmas, it is open from 7.30am to 6pm. There are strong links with the on-site school. The provision employs 12 childcare staff, eight of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The Ark Association Ltd (2) offers an inclusive service which meets the needs of each child attending, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their safety and welfare is promoted through mostly well-implemented policies and procedures. There is a wide range of toys and resources which, in the main, are used well to offer children interesting learning experiences both indoors and out and they make good progress in their learning and development. Generally strong links with other providers and positive relationships with parents support this effectively. Reflective and focused leadership and a friendly and professional staff team who are committed to contributing to the self-evaluation process means the setting has a good capacity for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that each child in the early years age range is assigned a key person. (Organisation) 25/05/2012

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

- re-consider the organisation of resources for supporting children's knowledge and understanding of the world to provide increased opportunities for spontaneous and active exploration
- ensure that there are clear systems in place for sharing information with other early years providers where the care of children is shared, in order to best ensure continuity and consistency for all such children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is underpinned by clear policies and procedures which are successfully implemented by the competent staff team. Good security measures are in place and staff deploy themselves effectively to ensure children are kept safe and are well supervised. In the after school club, the early years children have not been assigned a key person to take lead responsibility for ensuring that their individual needs are met and this is a specific legal requirement. Robust vetting procedures help ensure the suitability of staff who work with the children. A comprehensive risk assessment along with daily checking procedures ensure that potential hazards are identified and the associated risks minimised. Through regular training, all staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection.

Each child is valued and staff work effectively with other professionals to ensure that provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is tailored to their individual needs. Good relationships have been established with the on-site school and children enjoy regular visits for assemblies and special events which strongly supports a smooth transition for children when they move on. The setting have some effective links with other providers where the care of children is shared to promote consistency and continuity of children's care and learning. However, secure systems are not in place to ensure that this is the case for all such children.

Staff establish positive relationships with parents who speak highly of the friendly and welcoming staff team and the progress that their children make. They share initial information about their children's background, routines, needs and levels of ability, enabling children to settle and to begin to identify starting points for learning. Parents receive a regular, useful summary of their children's identified next steps and are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's assessment records. Along with informal daily verbal exchanges about children's achievements, there are more formal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress

at the annual parents evening. Ongoing information about the setting, such as fund raising events, how the ECAT (Every Child a Talker) scheme is implemented and development of a new resource area is shared verbally, in the regular newsletter and on the notice boards in the main entrance.

The staff team work efficiently together to create a bright and welcoming learning environment with a good selection of interesting activities both indoors and outdoors. They are well-led by the management team with regular support through induction procedures, regular meetings and an annual appraisal system. They are actively encouraged to further their professional qualifications and to access short training courses to enhance their existing skills and knowledge. There is an effective process of self-evaluation which incorporates input from the staff team and parents and ensures that all aspects of the provision are monitored well. This effectively supports the continuous improvement of the setting.

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

Children are happy and settled. They make good progress in their learning and development because staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and those less confident are given high levels of support from senior staff. Staff know the children well through their continuous observations along with effective liaison with parents. Every two months they evaluate their assessments of what children can do against the six areas of learning to identify children's next steps. This information is collated onto planning sheets which all staff use to influence their interaction with each child. Planning systems ensure that activities provided cover all areas of learning and that all equipment is regularly used.

Indoors, there are labelled spaces for children's personal belongings, strongly contributing to their sense of belonging and this is supported by attractive displays of their work around the environment. There is a good range of toys and resources to support children's learning across all areas, some of which are organised into areas of learning and made freely accessible enabling children to make their own selections and ensuring that there is a wide selection available at all times. Others, including those to support children's knowledge and understanding of the world, are provided on a more limited basis therefore restricting children's opportunities for spontaneous and active exploration. Good levels of support from staff and effective use of questioning whilst children play encourages children's developing language skills. The ongoing ECAT (Every child a talker) groups ensure all children are supported in their language development. Staff incorporate problem solving and numeracy skills into daily routines and planned activities. For example, they explore weight and capacity as they fill different sized containers and weigh ingredients when baking tarts.

Sensitive and personalised settling-in procedures help children to establish trusting relationships with staff. They demonstrate a good sense of security as they confidently move around their environment making their own decisions about

which toys they want to play with. They begin to learn about possible dangers and how to stay safe through routines such as regular emergency evacuation drills along with sensitive but clear reminders of rules, such as to walk indoors. Planned activities such as those related to road safety, support this. Good hygiene practices help to minimise the risk of spreading infection. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene habits through daily routines such as hand washing, and they follow these well.

The setting promotes healthy eating through the provision of a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at snack time and by working effectively with, and providing useful information for parents with regards to the contents of lunch boxes. Parents can opt for their children to have a two course cooked school meal. Staff seize opportunities as they arise to discuss general health issues so on an unexpected sunny day when they enjoy physical challenges and exploring bugs in the outdoor area, they also learn about the importance of drinking to keep hydrated and wearing caps to protect them from the warm sun.

Children behave well; they receive high levels of attention and staffs' use of language is positive and encouraging. They relate well to each other and, supported by staff, particularly during group activities, are learning the skills of sharing and taking turns. They display good manners and respond positively to the praise and reward systems, proudly showing their stickers for 'good eating' and wearing with pride the 'helper for the day' accessories. They develop an awareness of the wider world through the positive images of differences in society portrayed around the environment. This is supported well through planned activities such as those related to the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee. Children use the computer with support and regularly access other computerised equipment such as the digital camera, supporting their ability in using information technology. Overall, children are gaining well the skills they require in order to support future 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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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