

The Ark Pre School

144 High Street, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 7AT

Inspection date	26/09/2012
Previous inspection date	29/05/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- adults take considerable care to challenge and interest children by offering stimulating and well-planned activities across all required areas of learning.
- children's well-being and independence is at the heart of a reliable system that means all individual children always have a special caring adult available to them.
- adults think carefully about how to help children move forwards each day, and children's good progress is well documented from the time they start in the pre-school.
- The pre-school's strong inclusive ethos provides an overarching unobtrusive drive for all adults to help children who arrive with additional needs to join in with their friends, and to make rapid progress so they are ready to start school.
- A balance of time for free play and adult-led activities provides children with a reliable routine that includes valuable opportunities to work alone, with friends and in a small group.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children are not always engaged in active and creative learning when in larger groups, so their attention wanders and they are sometimes less eager to join in.
- Children's concentration and motivation is sometimes interrupted by requirements of the routine to join in group activities.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children and activities during the morning.
- The inspector interviewed the supervisor and sampled policies and documents.
- The inspector took feedback from staff, parents and committee members.
- A member of staff conducted a child observation alongside the inspector.
- The inspector conducted brief observations of practice with the supervisor.

Inspector

Chris Malone

Full Report

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 the village of Crowthorne, Berkshire. The pre-school operates from the church hall, which is available for its sole use 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.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions last from 9.15am to 12.15pm. There are currently 26 children on roll. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of some free early education to children aged three and four

years. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities those learning English as an additional language.

There are currently six members of staff including the supervisor and deputy, all working part-time. The supervisor has a BEd teaching degree, and one member of staff holds an international teaching degree and a level 3 qualification; two members of staff also hold a relevant level 3 qualification and one holds a level 2 qualification. A committee member works in the pre-school for one day a week. The pre-school is managed by the church committee.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Adults are skilled in questioning children, extending learning well. Children choose to propel cars down drain pipes outside, watching how far they run, and adults intervene sensitively encouraging them to talk about how far the cars roll using numbers marked on the ground. High expectations of all children, including those who are younger, means that all children progress well. This outdoor activity extended an earlier discussion about the length of coloured worms in a table game indoors, when children were encouraged to use mathematical language in conversation that stretched their thinking to the next stage.

Music and singing are used confidently to engage children's attention, but also to weave concepts and words seamlessly into activities. When the weather deteriorates, indoor physical games are offered, and children all enjoy playing cooperatively with a large, colourful parachute, which is also a way for adults to model and develop children's confidence to wait for their turn. Mathematical language is woven into the game and staff observe children so that the game can be developed to meet their needs. Action songs are clearly enjoyed by adults and children, who pretend to be scarecrows, and dance round the mulberry bush. Staff emphasise rhythms and rhymes to encourage early language development, which helps children who learn English as an additional language as well as children with confident speaking skills.

Some children enter the pre-school from cultural backgrounds that have not necessarily prepared them to be an active participant in this rich learning environment from day one. Experienced and sensitive adults work patiently alongside children observing their play and guiding them skilfully so they rapidly become used to the routine and expectations for behaviour. Children are also allowed time to explore their environment themselves. Exciting and well-resourced activities are provided for them to enjoy, especially during free play, when children's concentration is particularly high. Children use a large bucket filled with bubbly water to carefully pour into smaller containers without spillage. They select decorating brushes and choose to paint the outdoor mural of Noah's Ark carefully,

practising making big lines and shapes, stirring their 'paint' and persevering until the job is finished. To build on these experiences, small group opportunities are regularly provided for children to discuss their interests with each other and adults. They are keen to bring in items from home, for example, a measuring tape, to link with activities in the pre-school. They talk confidently in a calm environment. Children's attention is not always captured when in a larger group, which means that they are sometimes less eager to join in and they do not always link the larger group discussion with play opportunities later in the session. Children are well prepared for school through a variety of well-planned and child-led activities, and because they are encouraged to be independent and responsible members of the group.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The environment is stimulating, well-resourced and combines familiarity with new opportunities. Children settle comfortably and recognise and enjoy the daily routine both inside and outside, which allows independence but also offers a high ratio of skilled adults to children so an adult is always on hand if needed. Each child has an allocated 'key person' who links with their family, and develops detailed knowledge of their likes and dislikes. Consequently, all children feel comfortable in the pre-school, and develop strong bonds with adults and friends, which helps their confidence to contribute in small and large groups. When in a larger group several children were confident enough to say what they did not want to do. The supportive and enabling 'key person' system is a strength in the setting and is appreciated by parents.

Staff and helpers are good role models, entering into activities, songs and games with gusto, but also knowing when children need a more peaceful atmosphere. Two adults sing songs enthusiastically with four younger children using a mat in the porch area very effectively to allow for privacy and enjoyment. The children respond in kind, with finger actions and smiles, chipping in words to the songs throughout. Reassuring physical contact with children means that they feel valued and know that it is safe to join in.

Children become familiar with moving from place to place within the pre-school, from the playroom to the church, to the toilets, and between the inside and outdoor play areas. This helps them to prepare for attendance at other settings and starting school. Occasionally children are rushed into changes and as a result their concentration and the continuity of their play is interrupted. They are encouraged to become increasingly independent over their time in the pre-school, and regular local outings are organised. These are recorded in a photo album that is proudly shown to visitors.

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

Children experience both depth and breadth in their learning because the overview of the educational programmes includes a rich blend of activities always on offer, as well as those planned for specific occasions. All staff members have a secure understanding of

how children learn, and systems are in place to help staff to further develop their skills and knowledge through training in areas that interest them, for example training in outdoor learning contributing to the development of the bug hotel and mud kitchen. There are plans to develop the outdoor area even further.

Regular observations of children, accurate recording of their stages of development, and skilful identification of next steps in learning, mean that all children progress well. Children who are newly arrived in the country, whose home language may not be English, are particularly well supported to settle and fully participate in the group. Children with special educational needs are supported to work towards being ready for school by the staff who link effectively with other professionals. The pre-school also proactively links with other settings attended by children, using individual books and joint visits.

Clear policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe, secure and healthy despite the challenges of the current premises. Arrangements for safeguarding children and for supporting families are strong and embedded, for example there is a rigorous system for the safe entry and exit of visitors, and for visitors to be aware of health and safety requirements. New legal requirements are met, for example there is a policy and procedure for the safekeeping of mobile phones and cameras in the pre-school so that they do not present a risk to children.

Links with other settings, the local school, and professionals such as those from the local authority contribute to meeting children's needs in the pre-school. Involvement of people from the local community and the church community enhances the experiences offered to the children and their families, for instance, the librarian visits from next door, the church minister comes in to play his guitar, and the reception teacher visits prior to children starting school.

All recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed. The development of systems for monitoring quality are particularly strong, for example staff appraisals lead to training and development focusing effectively on developing children's learning. There are rotas and lists of staff duties, all of which they carry out diligently, but are flexible enough to vary according to need.

The management of the pre-school through the church provides a strong caring and inclusive ethos and offers an opportunity for all children to join in a wide range of celebrations such as the harvest festival, fruit picking and Chinese New Year.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
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Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children’s learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	119271
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	813576
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	The Ark Pre School
Date of previous inspection	29/05/2010

Telephone number

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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