

The Ark Preschool

St Augustines Church Centre, Lychgate Park, Locking, Weston Super Mare, North Somerset, BS24 8DA

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

17/10/2013

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Staff provide a welcoming environment where children learn through play.
- Children are happy and settled; they make good relationships and develop a sense of belonging.
- Positive communication with parents enables staff to meet children's care needs well.
- Staff welcome ideas from early years professionals in order to continue to improve the outcomes for children.

It is not yet good because

- The assessment system to effectively promote children's progress in their learning and development is not fully developed to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- Staff do not always act promptly when they identify hazards, to keep children safe in their play.
- Staff do not use the outside area effectively to promote all areas of learning, or provide meaningful activities to encourage children's interest in writing.
- Staff interaction is not consistent in promoting children's thinking, knowledge and vocabulary.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed and spoke to children during their activities both inside and outside.
- The inspector spoke to staff, and interviewed the provider and manager.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled documentation, which included children's progress records.

Inspector

Brenda Flewitt

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Ark Preschool was registered in 2013. It is run by a voluntary committee and operates from the main hall, and a smaller adjacent room at St Augustine's Church Centre, Locking, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset. The pre-school has use of a kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. The pre-school is open on Monday from 8.30am until 12.30pm, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8.30am to 3.30pm. The Wednesday session runs from 11.30am to 3.30pm. Each day a lunch time session is available from 11.30 to 12.30pm, offering a cooked lunch. The pre-school is open term time only. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register only. The pre-school provides funded early education for two, three and four-year-old children. There are currently 15 children on roll. The pre-school support children who learn English as an additional language. There are three members of staff who work with the children, two of whom hold an early years qualification at level 3, and one at level 2. The pre-school also employs a cook.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the assessment system to enable staff to monitor children's progress, seeking more information from parents to assess children's starting points on admission
- improve risk assessments to ensure hazards are minimised as soon as they are identified, in order to keep children safe.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop consistency in staff interaction to extend children's learning
- increase opportunities in the outdoor area to provide children with experiences in all areas of learning
- provide more opportunities for children to practise writing skills in meaningful situations.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. Staff provide a welcoming environment where children learn through play. Staff arrange the room prior to children arriving so that children can make choices from a suitable range of play equipment according to their interests. Staff are developing their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements. They plan a balance of self-chosen and adult-led activities to promote children's learning. They have started to make observations of children's play and achievements, which they record in individual learning diaries. These include dated and annotated photographs, and written observations linked to areas of learning. Staff use these to help identify children's next steps. However, the information that staff request from parents when children first start to attend is limited. Although they seek information that enables them to meet children's care needs well, staff take significant time making their own observations about what children already know. Therefore, they do not start planning for children's progress straight away. There is no clear system to give staff an overview of children's progress in order for them to identify any gaps in children's learning. Key persons have a satisfactory understanding of their responsibility for completing progress checks for children aged between two and three years.

Staff promote children's language appropriately. They use 'Listening Lola' (a soft toy) to encourage children to listen to one another in a group and to develop their confidence in speaking. Children pass the toy around and start to understand that it is their turn to talk when they are holding it. Staff talk with children during their activities, naming objects, people and actions. However, sometimes staff ask questions that only have one answer, or do not give children time to respond. Therefore, they are not always encouraging children's thinking or ideas. Staff plan activities that encourage children's awareness of shape and capacity, such as filling and emptying containers with sand in the 'mud kitchen' or moulding play dough. However, they miss opportunities to extend children's understanding and vocabulary linked to mathematical concepts, or to solve problems during every day activities. Children enjoy listening to stories. Staff supply a range of books that children can select from low shelving, and relax on cushions as they share with adults or friends. Children are starting to recognise their name label as they arrive at the pre-school. Over time, staff provide a variety of materials that encourage children to make marks and practise skills for writing. However, they do not regularly include writing materials in meaningful situations such as role play. Children use their imaginations well as they act out real life situations, and make models with dough. For example, a child decides to make a 'cake' from dough, flavoured with 'strawberry and orange juice'. A child scoots on a bike in the outdoor area, stopping and starting according to the colour of the pretend traffic lights named by a member of staff. Children learn about changes in nature as they observe caterpillars changing into butterflies, and as they plant and nurture seeds into plants.

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

Children are happy and settled. They make good relationships with adults and one another. Staff plan group activities and welcome children by name, which helps children get to know one another and develop a sense of belonging. Staff acknowledge children's birthdays, making them feel special on their particular day as they bring in traditional family foods to share with their friends. Children behave well. They know what staff expect of them through familiar routines and clear explanations. Children learn to take turns and respond well to tasks of responsibility, such as helping transport food to the table. Staff encourage children to help pack away toys, which encourages them to care for equipment. Staff regularly praise children for their efforts and achievements, which helps boost their self-esteem and confidence. Staff help to prepare children for school as they encourage their independence in practical skills such as, preparing food, managing clothes and their personal hygiene. Arrangements to visit the school and meet their prospective teachers, help children know what to expect in a new situation. Staff encourage children to be aware of their own safety in some situations. They involve children in identifying hazards in the play park, and teach them road safety when out walking.

Children confidently move around the pre-school. They make their own choices from a selection of resources, both inside and outside. Staff provide daily opportunities for children to have fresh air and exercise to promote their good health. Visits to the local play park provide challenging apparatus to encourage large muscle skills. However, staff do not use the outside area fully to promote all areas of learning, to effectively support those children who learn best outdoors. Children practise good routines for personal hygiene and develop increasing independence as they use toilet and hand washing facilities. They make choices from healthy options at meal times, from food freshly cooked on the premises that provides a balanced diet. Staff are clear about respecting children's dietary needs and allergies.

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

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Overall, staff implement policies and procedures that promote children's safety and welfare. Staff complete daily checks to ensure the premises are secure. However, although staff identify risks, they are not always proactive in removing hazards in order to prevent accidents, particularly in the outdoor area. The provider and manager have a good understanding of their responsibility to protect children from harm. The manager is the designated child protection officer; she has attended the required training. The provider has plans to make sure all staff attend training so that they are confident in recognising signs and symptoms that would cause concern. There is a clear policy for staff to refer to, which they share with parents.

Overall, staff promote positive partnerships with parents. They provide useful information about the pre-school by way of written policies, displays and regular newsletters. Key persons make themselves available to exchange verbal information on a daily basis, which enables them to meet children's care needs well. Staff encourage children to take home a

soft toy to care for, which involves parents input, promoting communication about children's activities at home. Staff are aware of their responsibility in sharing information with other practitioners when children attend additional early years settings. They have established verbal contact and plan to develop ongoing dialogue in order to promote consistency in children's care and learning.

The provider and manager have started to monitor staff effectiveness through regular appraisals to help identify any training needs. There are some successful self-evaluation methods to help identify areas for improvement. Staff evaluate how children use resources, which they use in planning the room layout. Staff welcome ideas from early years advisors. They also visit and meet with other providers to share good practice ideas, which contribute to continuous improvement in children's experiences.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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.
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 action. 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	EY458572
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	912023
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	15
Name of provider	The Ark Preschool Committee
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01934 824353

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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