

The Exwick Ark

The Old School, Exwick Road, Exeter, EX4 2AT

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

13/12/2013

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 requires improvement

- Children are settled and happy and eager to attend nursery. Staff establish positive and caring relationships which support children to be confident, active and independent learners.
- There are effective systems in place to support children when they first join the nursery and when they move onto the next stage in their learning. This includes home visits and accompanied visits to settings during times of transition.
- Children have access to a well-planned play and learning environment both indoors and outside. The effective organisation of space, resources and equipment encourages children to explore and investigate freely.
- Staff establish effective partnerships with external agencies to support children from vulnerable families, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Following accreditation as a Healthy Eating setting, children are developing positive attitudes to healthy eating as they learn about healthy lifestyles and choose from a range of nutritious meals and snacks.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not effectively engage all parents with the setting. As a result, opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's learning and development are not fully established; some parents do not know the name of their child's key person, are not sure of where

to access the setting policies and some are not clear on the steps to take should they have a complaint about the setting.

- Staff do not consistently promote children's understanding of possible risks within their environment, which limits how they learn about safety.
- Staff do not always pick up on inappropriate behaviour which means that children receive inconsistent messages about expectations for behaviour.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector talked to both owners/managers of the setting, and staff.
- The inspector took a detailed tour of the premises and checked on the security of the environment.
- The inspector observed activities in each area, and the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector sampled a selection of policy documents, including risk assessments, critical incidents and the complaints file
- The inspector sampled children's assessment records and discussed planning with staff.
- The inspector spoke to parents as they dropped off and collected their children, and took account of their views.

Inspector

Janet Harvell

Full report

Information about the setting

The Exwick Ark is a privately owned nursery. It registered in new premises in 2013 and operates from an old school, which has been refurbished, in the city of Exeter in Devon. The Exwick Ark is an ICAN accredited nursery and has also achieved accreditation as a Healthy Setting. The ground floor accommodation comprises of one a room for two to four-year-old children and a room for the youngest children. There are three separate rooms for quiet activities and a dedicated sleep room. There are toilet facilities for children and adults. There is a kitchen where cooked meals are prepared daily. There are enclosed garden areas available for outdoor play. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am until 5.45pm all year round.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is funded to provide free early education to children aged two, three and four years. There are 19 members of staff, (including the two owner-managers). Of these, 18 work directly with the children. There are two members of staff on the team with Early Years Professional Status including one of the owner-managers who holds Qualified Teacher Status. All of the remaining staff hold qualifications from level 2 to 6. The provider 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:

- establish more effective partnerships with parents and carers, including those who are more difficult to engage with, in order to further promote a shared approach and continuity in children's learning.
- ensure that all parents and carers know the name of their child's key person, know how to gain access to the setting's policies and procedures and know what to do in the event of a complaint.

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

- improve opportunities further for children to consistently develop their awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe from harm
- strengthen the existing expectations for children's behaviour so that children receive consistent messages about what is appropriate behaviour.

Inspection judgements

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

The implementation of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is sound. Children play happily in the well-resourced environment, which supports development across all seven areas of learning. Space is well organised and children enjoy playing freely.

The staff team has an appropriate awareness of the learning and development requirements. Children access a broad and balanced range of experiences that reflect the emerging needs and interests of children. Recent training has resulted in the development of planning which more effectively reflects the characteristics of effective learning. For example, older children use magnifying glasses to investigate the features of earthworms and, in another activity, explore what happened when cornflour and water were mixed together. At times staff do not always respond to the emerging interests of some children. For example, when children begin to write with their fingers in cornflour and water staff miss the opportunity to encourage their exploration of the different marks they were making.

Staff in the baby room concentrate appropriately on supporting the key areas of learning for young children. Babies benefit from the development of special relationships with key people and they are able to access photographs from home which provide opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations about their families. Young children develop an interest in books at an early stage as they sit comfortably with staff, who hold the book so that children have a good view and take pleasure in sharing books. As a result, children are secure and develop in confidence.

Overall, key persons have a sound understanding of where their key children are in their learning and use this to promote their progress effectively. Staff take time to get to know children and their families when they start at the setting, conducting home visits and spending time to find out about the children's needs, abilities and interests. Regular observations of children's play builds upon this knowledge and staff plan meaningful activities which build upon children's existing skills and interests. This means that children are interested and motivated to learn. Most children are working within the typical range of development for their age, and are making sound individual progress in all aspects of their learning and development considering their starting points.

Children are encouraged to revisit their learning experiences and reflect upon their achievements. Individual scrapbooks contain photographs of children engaged in a range of activities, together with examples of work, which they enjoy looking at. Children excitedly point at themselves in the photographs whilst staff reinforce the learning that is evidenced. For example, they remember the chickens they hatched from the eggs, and recognise their written names. As a result, children develop confidence as they learn to value their individual achievements.

There are clear systems in place for completing the progress check for two-year-old

children. This effectively supports the monitoring of children's development from an early age. As a result, children's learning is continually reviewed and any needs are promptly identified and addressed. Staff encourage parents to contribute to their children's records and discuss any areas where children may need further support and together plan children's next steps. A number of parents are more difficult to engage with and, as a result, there are missed opportunities for sharing ongoing information and promoting consistency of learning between the setting and home. Staff form positive relationships with other settings children attend which actively promotes a cohesive approach to children's learning.

The nursery has a large number of children who are learning English as a second language and plans support this effectively. In addition to working with parents to provide more individualised support, regular small group times support children's developing communication skills and as a result they are making sound progress relative to their starting points. Overall they are developing appropriate skills for school or the next stage of learning.

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

Staff provide a welcoming environment and children benefit from a wide range of toys and activities to meet all of their needs, both inside and outside. Children and babies are happy and settled. Children build secure bonds with their key person, which effectively supports their personal social and emotional development. Parents describe how eager their children are to visit the setting and how they miss it when they are unable to attend. However, not all parents know the name of their child's key person. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator supports staff well and develops good partnerships with external agencies to promote continuity of care. This sharing of information means children's learning and welfare needs are being supported appropriately.

Staff take good steps to encourage children to have a positive attitude to healthy eating. Children take part in some cooking activities and discuss the foods that are good for them. As a result of successful accreditation as a Healthy Eating setting, children learn about healthy lifestyles linked to nutritious meals and snacks. Staff provide children with a good range of healthy foods at snack and lunch time. Children are encouraged to peel oranges, cut fruit with child-safe utensils or use tweezers to pick up fruit. As well as introducing children to healthy eating options, this also helps develop their physical and independence skills.

Children become aware of safe procedures as they are involved in emergency evacuation drills. There are appropriate procedures in place to encourage children's safety when on outings. For example, they wear high visibility jackets on outings and walks to the local park, in order to keep them safe. Children develop a good understanding of hygiene routines as they wash their hands before eating to prevent the spread of germs. Older children demonstrate growing independence in their use of the bathroom. On occasion staff miss opportunities to further promote children's understanding of keeping themselves safe, for example by remind children to keep all four chair legs on the floor to avoid falls.

All staff have attended safeguarding training and demonstrate through discussion a good understanding of child protection issues. Staff work effectively with outside agencies to safeguard children. These practices help to keep children safe.

Overall staff support children to play co-operatively as they learn to share resources and take turns and children are mostly well behaved. For example, older children manage their behaviour by negotiating with others regarding sharing resources. However, at times children's excitement in the activities they are involved could be more effectively managed. For example during the gloop activity, some children started flicking the gloop at each other which was overlooked. Another child dropped her apron on the floor instead of returning this to its appropriate place. This means that children do not receive consistent messages linked to appropriate expectations for behaviour and this can have an impact on other's play.

There are very good procedures in place to support children when they move to other settings or school. For example, key staff accompany children on visits to new settings which means that they are emotionally prepared for the next stage of their learning. As a result children are well prepared for school.

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

The inspection took place as a result of notification from the provider that a child had gone missing from the nursery during a visit with staff to the nursery recycling bins. The child was quickly found by a member of staff and returned. The inspection found that as a result health and safety procedures have been investigated thoroughly. Staff have revised their policy and procedures with clear actions to be taken. The complaints procedure has been reviewed and additional documentation has been developed to support the writing of accurate and detailed records of different incidents. The managers have led staff in reviewing actions that must be taken in the event of all incidents, including the timeliness of notification to parents and Ofsted. Managers have reviewed and updated all risk assessments. As a result, they have put in place additional gates and fencing. Entrance into the setting is through a locked door, which is only opened by staff who welcome parents and children into the setting. Visitors go through a barrier to access the rooms that children use. This is permanently staffed during drop off and pick up times to ensure that children cannot exit the premises this way without supervision. This effectively controls who enters and exits the main building and helps to promote children's safety appropriately. As a result, the environment is safe and secure. The revised policy documents, new procedures and revised incident and complaints procedures will be shared with parents. Parents were informed of the new gates and fences through social media updates the weekend following the incident.

The managers have a sound understanding of their responsibility in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are systems in place to monitor

and evaluate all aspects of the nursery. The managers monitor the educational programme appropriately. Regular observations and termly reviews of children's records provide a sound overview of children's achievement, and identify those children whose progress may not be at expected levels. One of the managers, who is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, implements appropriate strategies to enable all children to make appropriate progress. This includes working with outside agencies where additional support is identified.

The setting's self-evaluation includes a detailed action plan for further improvement. Self-evaluation, together with support from local authority advisors, is used appropriately overall to help identify strengths and prioritise areas for development. For example, the recent move to new premises has prompted reflection on the storage of resources to support physical development. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback on the provision, on a daily basis and via questionnaires; the information gained is used to inform self-evaluation. Current areas for development include increasing the involvement of parents in their children's education and looking at ways of further developing learning between the home and the setting. A recent audit has been conducted to identify how to move forward with this target.

There are systems in place to recruit and check the suitability of staff. All staff undergo suitable vetting procedures and are appropriately qualified to care for children. Proof of these checks was available at inspection and included evidence for students and volunteer workers. Two staff have Early Years Professional Status, and two other members of the team hold degrees in early years care and education.

The managers are supportive of staff development and use annual appraisals and supervision sessions effectively to identify training needs. This means that staff bring new ideas from their own research and reading to implement in the nursery. For example staff have attended training on the characteristics of effective learning and as a result have developed planning documents to incorporate this. The development of the mud kitchen was also a result of training and staff have produced leaflets for parents to explain the value of this. As a result activities are more effective in supporting children's learning and development.

All staff are clear about the safeguarding policy and procedures. There is an effective induction procedure during which all staff complete standard safeguarding training which means that they have a clear awareness of their roles and responsibilities for managing any concerns. They liaise very well with other agencies involved in children's care to provide a consistent approach to working with each family.

Overall staff develop sound relationships with most parents and carers. Home visits take place when children join the setting and new parents also receive a range of information about the nursery, including an informative prospectus. Most parents say they are kept well informed about the provision offered to their child. They say staff are very approachable and support them well in settling their child. Parents report that their children are happy and settled and are keen to come to the setting. Staff spend time at the end of each day talking to parents. This works sufficiently well to keep them informed of their child's achievements and overall, there are good systems to share information with

parents on a regular basis such as termly parent meetings. There is a web-site that provides information on the themes being followed and which encourages parents to be involved. For example they are asked to bring in photographs of their bonfire night and Eid festivities to support the theme of Bonfire night and Eid, and also to bring in autumnal items for the nature collection to support the theme of patterns and shapes in the garden. The main door is also used to display key notices for parents and carers, and there is a separate annexe which contains a parent waiting room with a large display board for notices. However there are some parents who feel that communication could be improved. Some parents are unclear about some of the policies and procedures, which is a breach of a legal requirement. The managers are continuing to review and develop appropriate strategies to involve all parents more in their children's learning and development.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY466130
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	946703
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	94
Name of provider	The Exwick Ark Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01392 425551

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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.

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.

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