

Inspection date	16 January 2019
Previous inspection date	Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The centre provides a welcoming, therapeutic and safe environment for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff provide a wide variety of individualised experiences based on children's interests and their learning needs.
- Staff build excellent partnerships with parents, which enables children to benefit from a coordinated and supportive approach to their care and welfare. Parents speak very highly of the centre and the care their children receive.
- Effective arrangements are in place for ensuring children settle and enjoy attending the centre. The sensitive, enabling approach offered by their key persons means that children's confidence and independence steadily develop.
- Positive messages are conveyed to teach children to live healthily. Personal care routines are mastered. Children enjoy being physically active in the well-equipped gymnasium and have opportunities for outdoor play in the fresh air.
- Extensive induction procedures, team meetings and regular supervision ensure that all staff receive effective coaching and training to support individual children's needs.
- On occasions, the organisation of larger group activities does not ensure that the most able children are always effectively engaged in their learning.
- Staff have not yet fully established highly successful partnerships with all the other nurseries and schools that children attend to promote consistency of learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review and improve the planning and organisation of larger group activities to ensure that the most able children are fully able to engage in effective learning at these times
- explore more ways of building on the partnerships with all the other settings that children attend to promote greater continuity in children's learning and development.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nominated individual and viewed a sample of the children's development records.
- The inspector spoke to the management, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff, self-evaluation, risk assessment and policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from their written responses.

Inspector

Pat Champion

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the importance of safeguarding vulnerable children. They have a secure understanding of wider child protection issues and confidently explain the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. All staff are vigilant about the children's security and safety. Risk assessments are frequently carried out to ensure that the premises and equipment remain safe. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that only those suitable to work with children do so. The views of parents and children are welcomed and incorporated into the planning of activities and routines. Children's overall development is regularly reviewed by both the management and through external moderation. This helps to identify quickly when further interventions and additional support are needed. Staff work in close partnership with outside agencies to ensure that all children and their families get the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They frequently observe children in order to assess their individual interests, stage of development and the targets for their next steps in learning. Staff enthusiastically support children's communication. For example, they share visual communication tools effectively to help children make requests and explain their emotions. They join children as they play and engage in constant discussion, introducing new vocabulary and modelling language during activities. Children delight in sensory experiences and experiment with dough, water or shaving foam. Staff support children's early mathematical development and they increase their awareness of numbers, colours, shape and size during daily activities. Parents are given many opportunities to become involved in their children's learning and they frequently share information about their children's achievements at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children build secure relationships with their highly skilled and caring key persons. This supports children's emotional well-being and sense of belonging. Staff know all the children very well. They respond quickly to any change in children's behaviour and temperament. For example, staff recognise when a child becomes tired and provide space for them to relax peacefully and undisturbed. Staff are good role models and manage children's behaviour well. Children are kind to each other and demonstrate good table manners at mealtimes. They use a variety of resources and books that portray positive images of differences and similarities between themselves and others.

Outcomes for children are good

Children make good progress given their starting points. They are happy and develop their social skills. Children follow their interests and become absorbed in their play and learning experiences. They learn to listen and follow instructions. They develop skills in readiness for starting school. Children learn to dress themselves, show an interest in books and have fun learning popular songs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY538389
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10079987
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 - 7
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	The Ark Centre Charity CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP538388
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01245 467355

The Ark Centre registered in 2016 and is run by a charitable organisation. The centre employs nine members of childcare staff each day. Of these, three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 and two staff hold a qualification at level 3. Qualified speech and language therapists and occupational therapists also work with the children. The centre opens from Monday to Friday for 41 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 9.30am to 12.30pm and from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Holiday care sessions operate according to demand.

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