

Inspection of The Ark Nursery

The Orchard, Birds Lane, Epwell, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 6LQ

Inspection date: 29 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
--	-------------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide a setting where each child is valued as a unique individual. Children eagerly arrive in the morning, separate from their parents or carers without hesitation and engage in activities alongside their friends and staff.

Children develop their good physical skills and enjoy playing outdoors. They learn to manage risks in their own play, such as balancing across small foam bricks. Children confidently use tools for a purpose. This is demonstrated as they use hammers to tap the golf tees into the large marrows. Children paint the guinea pig hutch with brushes and water and learn to use knives safely when preparing snacks. They develop their manipulative skills, which is illustrated as they roll and cut dough.

Staff have high expectations for children. They work hard to provide activities which capture children's imagination with unusual and thought-provoking resources. For instance, staff use a new strategy to support children's storytelling and love of literacy. Children use a number of props to create their story, discussing the sequencing of the story they create. Young children are able to discuss terms such as characters, problems and solutions.

Children behave well under the warm and nurturing supervision of staff. For instance, they play games, work together to complete puzzles and help to clear away toys ready for story time. Staff consistently praise children for their positive behaviour. This helps them to feel secure and try new activities with confidence.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The experienced staff know children extremely well. Thorough induction procedures help children to settle smoothly into the nursery's routines. Staff gather detailed information to ensure that they know children's individual interests and needs securely to plan for their future learning and care.
- Children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories. Staff strongly promote children's communication skills overall. Children's books, rhymes and stories are at the heart of many of the activities planned for children. Stories are well-told and capture children's imagination. Staff successfully encourage children to listen, pay attention and follow instructions of increasing complexity.
- Staff are kind and gentle role models to children. They warmly praise children and value their work in the many exciting displays. Staff help children to explore their emotions and learn to be tolerant of others. For instance, children have visual prompts and their own self-portraits to help to suggest why they are sad or happy.
- The manager considers partnerships with parents to be instrumental in

supporting children's learning and to secure the ongoing development of the nursery. The manager regularly seeks parents' views and communicates back to them any changes they have made as a result of their feedback. Staff exchange information with parents about children's care and education. This contributes to plans that staff make in the nursery to support children's learning and to meet their care needs well.

- Staff use additional funding well to address gaps in children's learning, for example, by providing one-to-one support and further resources. Staff's interaction with children is positive overall. However, during small-group activities, some children are not fully involved in a meaningful way for the duration of the activities.
- Staff implement effective systems for observing and assessing children's ongoing progress, including clear identification of the next steps in each child's learning. For example, individual children are provided with specific tailored support to develop their confidence in playing with others or to build on their communication and language skills.
- Children are developing self-care skills and independence well. For instance, they learn how to put on their own coats and boots for outdoor play. Children are beginning to understand about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, staff talk to children during mealtimes about what they are eating and the positive impact that making healthy food choices has on their bodies.
- Staff work well as a team. They have regular meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision and continuously reflect on their practice and the experiences they provide for children. Training, coaching and supervision meetings help the manager to develop and improve staff's practice. However, observations of staff do not help to clearly identify the weaknesses in staff interactions with children, to further develop their already good teaching skills.
- Staff build very effective partnerships with the local primary school that children are due to attend. This helps to ensure that children are fully supported as they prepare for the next stage in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager places a high priority on making sure that children are safe and this is well managed throughout the nursery. She ensures staff are well-trained in child protection procedures and wider safeguarding issues. The manager holds frequent safeguarding supervision meetings and makes certain staff access the latest training. She regularly tests their knowledge and understanding through spot checks, quizzes and staff meetings. Policies and procedures reflect the advice and guidance of the local authorities and are fully available to parents.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- engage children as well as possible in group activities to enhance their learning further and encourage them to be fully involved
- strengthen the arrangements for the supervision of staff, to focus more precisely on monitoring the quality of teaching and supporting staff to build further on their already strong teaching skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	133627
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10108480
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	21
Name of registered person	Neal, Julia Margaret
Registered person unique reference number	RP511930
Telephone number	01295 780580
Date of previous inspection	27 April 2015

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Nursery registered in 1997 and is located in the rural village of Epwell, near Banbury, in Oxfordshire. The nursery employs four members of childcare staff who work directly with the children, all of whom hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one who holds early years teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 9am to 4pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amanda Perkin

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk with the manager, who is also the provider, through all areas of the nursery and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through questionnaires and testimonials.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of relevant documents, including evidence of staff's qualifications and their suitability to work with children.

We carried out this inspection 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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 reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2019