

Inspection of The Ark

Hall Bank, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 0RF

Inspection date: 9 January 2020

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

Children cheerfully come into the setting and are greeted by staff members who are warm and welcoming. Children settle quickly into the routine of the day. Staff deliver unique learning experiences that are enhanced by knowing the children well. They work together to support children to insure there are no missed opportunities. Babies enjoy a sensory experience as they prod and poke at play dough infused with various smells. Staff take older children's interests into account when planning new activities. Younger children develop and embed their knowledge of counting to five as they play a game of hide and seek outdoors. Children are generally well behaved. They listen to instructions given by staff and follow their advice. For example, when coming back inside for lunch, children take off their coats and line up to wash their hands in turn. When a younger child becomes upset, staff take immediate action to comfort them. Staff talk to children about the benefits of eating vegetables and carrying out healthy actions such as washing their hands. Staff encourage older children to be independent. They serve themselves at lunchtime and practise dressing up in school uniforms. Children are well prepared for the next stage in learning and their eventual move to school.

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

- There is a strong ethos of British values in this setting. Staff provide children with a range of activities to choose from, such as playing in sand outside or painting with toy tractor wheels. Managers ensure that staff give children a broad range of learning experiences that reflect the local community and beyond. For example, children visit the local residential care home regularly. Staff encourage children to celebrate each person's differences and children start to gain an understanding of what makes them unique.
- Staff carry out regular observations and assess children's level of development. Staff use their knowledge of children's abilities to set attainable goals. They have high expectations of children; they set a target which is easily achievable, and another target for children to aim for. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Parent partnerships are strong. Staff celebrate the relationships they have fostered with the children and their families. They gather information about the children during settling-in sessions. They use this to measure each child's starting point. Staff communicate with parents daily and regularly share updates on children's progress. They send out regular reports and have parents' meetings to ensure there is always a two-way flow of information. As a result, parents say they feel involved in their child's learning journey and remark that they are content knowing their children are being looked after well.
- The manager is reflective. She gathers the views of parents, staff and children to gain a better understanding of the setting's strengths and any areas in need of

improvement. She is confident in discussing advancements the nursery has already made and those she plans for the future. The company supports the manager well and together they are taking action to develop a higher quality of education for the children.

- The staff set out activities for children which are engaging. Pre-school children gather and take turns to cut the fruit and vegetables. The staff position themselves around the environment to ensure children are well supported. For instance, staff provide describing words and children repeat new words, such as 'courgette' and 'avocado'. However, the systems in place to monitor the teaching practice of staff are not yet fully embedded by management to raise the quality of teaching.
- The managers provide children with an engaging learning environment in new premises. Children's learning flows between the indoor and outdoor spaces, and they choose which activities to involve themselves in. The children play with a wide range of resources. For instance, each room has an area for children to access a collection of stories and factual books. Limited resources outside prevent children engaging in more-challenging activities that would help fully extend and support their movement skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone is aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe and secure. Managers and staff have a good understanding of potential signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm and how to seek help to protect them. Managers and staff understand the importance of keeping accurate records and documentation. They hold regular updates in staff meetings and can access an online course to develop their understanding of safeguarding issues. The management team carries out robust recruitment procedures and ensures that staff are suitable through vetting checks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to embed systems to monitor and coach staff to ensure the quality of teaching is consistent across all practitioners
- continue to develop the already engaging outdoor space to allow opportunities for children to develop their physical skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY320350
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10115831
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	Ark Childcare (UK) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP526039
Telephone number	01743791540
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2016

Information about this early years setting

The Ark registered in 2006. It is one of three provisions operated by the registered person. The nursery employs 26 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds early years teacher status, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5 and 14 staff members hold level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Laura Green

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to staff and held a meeting with the nursery management team as well as looking at a sample of the setting's documents.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outside. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of a planned activity with the manager of the nursery.
- The inspector had a tour of the and nursery held discussions with the manager about how they promote children's learning.

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.

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