

Inspection of The Ark Nursery

The Ark Nursery, Foundry Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 2PP

Inspection date: 23 August 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children show positive relationships with staff. One-year-olds snuggle up to staff to listen to a story. Children confidently talk to staff when they play alongside them. Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure. They eagerly separate from parents, say goodbye to them at the door, and show staff where they hang their belongings. Children behave well. They play cooperatively with others and learn to share. An example of this is when children make dough with their friends. They take it in turns to add ingredients to a bowl and to mix the contents together. Children demonstrate a sense of pride in their achievements. When they complete artwork, they are keen to show staff their creations.

Four-year-olds show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they show visitors how they kneel around the fire pit when staff take them for forest school sessions. Children say that in the forest area they like to play on the tyre swing and that they need to 'hold on really tight'. Children are happy and keen to explore and investigate the resources on offer. For instance, they find pictures of different animals and ask staff, 'What's that?'. Children learn interesting new words. Staff stretch children's understanding of different animals and tell them it is a 'chameleon' or an 'armadillo'.

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

- Staff encourage children to learn key skills in preparation for their move on to school. For example, children listen and follow instructions when staff ask them to do actions and say familiar phrases from favourite stories.
- Staff use their good knowledge of children to help provide opportunities to enhance the experiences they receive at home. An example of this is when they encourage children to take turns to promote positive behaviour. This is particularly beneficial for children who do not have siblings and opportunities to share their own toys at home. Children learn how to behave positively around others.
- Staff talk to children about potential dangers when they research information on technological devices. For example, they share a safety booklet with children about how to use the internet and explain that if something 'pops up' when they use a computer, to tell an adult. This helps to promote children's safety when they access the internet.
- The manager shares information with school teachers about children's learning when children move on to school. This helps to promote consistency in their development. Staff help children to be emotionally ready for their move on to school. For instance, they read children stories about going to school. Children say that when they go to school, they will 'play outside' and that their teacher is 'going to blow a whistle to go inside'.

- Staff observe and assess children's learning. They use this information to identify what children need to learn next. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills. They ask them a good range of questions and allow children time to respond. This gives children time to process information before they answer. When staff support babies to walk bare foot across cereal on a tray, they say 'crunch, crunch, crunch'. This helps babies to understand words that link to the sounds they hear.
- The managers and staff team work closely with parents and other professionals to provide targeted support to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Parents comment positively about the nursery. They say that staff are 'friendly, warm and welcoming'. They appreciate the updates they get from staff about their children's development and say that staff 'get to know the individual child'.
- Occasionally, staff's interactions with children do not build further on what one- and two-year-olds already know and can do. An example of this is when one-year-olds show a fascination with throwing objects. Staff do not offer children further opportunities to throw, to support their developing strength and hand-to-eye coordination. Another example is when staff want two-year-olds to recognise facial expressions, such as 'happy' and 'sad'. Staff do not always build on what children already know.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager regularly asks staff safeguarding questions. This contributes to staff's understanding of how to identify the signs of abuse, neglect and extreme views. Furthermore, the manager and staff know where to report any concerns they have regarding children's safety. The contact details for relevant safeguarding agencies are clearly displayed in the nursery. The manager follows robust recruitment procedures when she employs new staff to work with children. The manager checks staff's ongoing suitability to work with children. This helps to promote children's safety. The cook and staff find out about children's medical and dietary requirements when they first start. They provide children with meals and drinks that promote their individual needs.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen interactions with one- and two-year-olds to build further on what they already know and can do.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2502942
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10194492
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	96
Name of registered person	The Ark Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2502940
Telephone number	01780 482113
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Nursery re-registered in 2018 and is situated in Stamford, Lincolnshire. The nursery employs 28 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds qualified teacher status, three hold early years professional status, two hold early years teacher status, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6, two hold level 4, 12 hold level 3 and two hold level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Ruane

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together in all areas of the nursery and discussed how she intends to implement the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with staff and the provider at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager. She reviewed relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Feedback from parents was gathered through discussions and the inspector took account of their views.

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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