

Inspection of The Ark Montessori Nursery

37 County Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HN

Inspection date: 15 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The learning and development experiences for children are poor, particularly for the youngest children and those with additional needs. Adults do not consider children's individual needs or stage of development when planning activities or group circle times. For example, children are expected to sit for long periods and they lose interest and become disruptive. The setting does not offer a broad and balanced curriculum. The manager and staff do not have high expectations of children's learning. This means that children's experiences are limited. For instance, staff emphasise literacy and mathematics activities and provide little opportunity to support children's personal, social and emotional development. Children receive few opportunities to share their ideas or make their own choices because adult-led activities are very structured and adult voices are dominant. This has an impact on children's ability to develop their communication and language skills. Staff do not support children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills effectively. For example, when children were unable to roll balls down some guttering because they were too big, staff took the balls from the children, saying they were 'too big', and gave them smaller ones.

Despite this, children seem happy and settled. They form good relationships with the staff, who are kind and caring and offer them praise. Children generally behave well. However, there are times when they show challenging behaviour and staff do not support their understanding of this. As a result, children do not learn how to adapt their own behaviour.

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

- Leadership and management are weak. The manager focuses on the presentation of the learning environment and activities over how the curriculum can build on what children already know and can do. As a result, the curriculum does not meet the individual needs of the range of children who attend.
- The youngest children and those with additional needs do not make as much progress as they could. All ages of children sit together at circle times, and most children find the learning too difficult. As a result, they become bored and distracted and the sessions are often disrupted. Members of staff have identified that these sessions need to change, but the manager has not acted on this. In addition, children with additional needs are sometimes asked lots of questions that they do not understand how to answer. During role play they were asked, 'Where are you off to? Does this hat fit me? Is this a bus? Is it a train? What is it?' in quick succession.
- The quality of teaching is poor. Although observations of practice are used for staff development, the manager does not demonstrate a good enough awareness of effective teaching methods to support staff's improvement. As a

result, interactions between children and staff are overly adult driven and children do not have the opportunity to express their ideas or further develop their learning.

- Children are not supported to develop their language or vocabulary well. There are many occasions when staff do not take children's ideas or interests into consideration. For example, children at the writing table are directed by staff as to what they can draw.
- Children are not supported to manage their own behaviour and learn how to keep themselves safe. This is because adults are not always consistent about the setting's expectations and the reasons why. For instance, when children run to the toilets, staff ask them to walk. However, when they run back from the toilets, staff do not reinforce their expectations of children's behaviour.
- Children are not encouraged to develop high levels of curiosity when learning or to develop their creative or critical thinking skills. This limits the extent of children's learning and the progress they make. For example, staff observe children experimenting in the water tray with fish and different-sized containers. They ask children questions about what they are doing. However, when children do not respond, staff walk away with no further interaction.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their independence skills because they are often restricted by adults. Children's aprons for water play are put on for them. As a result, children are not supported to become more independent in their self-help skills and get ready for the next stage of development.
- There are positive relationships between parents and staff. Parents are enthusiastic about the support and care their children receive from the nursery and say that communication with the nursery is good. For example, parents receive daily updates about their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has robust procedures in place and understands her role in safeguarding. She has secure recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff who work with the children are suitable to do so. Staff undertake safeguarding training and have a good understanding of how to protect the children in their care. For instance, they know to take any concerns they have to the safeguarding lead. The setting is risk assessed daily to provide children with a safe and secure environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure that children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the knowledge and skills they need to move on to the next stage of their development	15/11/2021
improve staff's knowledge of how to support the learning needs of the youngest children and those who have additional needs in the three prime areas	15/11/2021
ensure children are supported to develop their creative and critical thinking skills	15/11/2021
implement systems to support children to develop the skills needed to regulate their behaviour independently	15/11/2021
improve professional development opportunities so that staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of how to support children in their learning.	15/11/2021

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY102531
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10209389
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Neotrace Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP527908
Telephone number	0208 240 0076
Date of previous inspection	23 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Montessori Nursery registered in 2001. It is situated in the London Borough of Croydon. The nursery is open from 9am until 3pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions run from 9am to midday and from midday to 3pm, or children can stay all day. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery supports children who are learning English as an additional language. There are seven staff members, all of whom have relevant childcare qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jacquie Brown

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the provider.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and shared their views about the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- The inspector observed staff's activities and their interactions with the children during play.
- The inspector had conversations with staff.
- The manager and the inspector had a meeting to discuss the leadership and management of the setting.
- Documents that were relevant to the inspection were reviewed by the inspector.

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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