

Inspection of NOA's Ark Nursery

North Oxfordshire Academy, Drayton Road, Banbury OX16 0UD

Inspection date: 19 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thrive and enjoy their time at the nursery. They play happily and get fully involved in the exciting range of activities available to them. Children form strong bonds with the caring and nurturing staff. They settle well and respond to the high expectations staff have for them. Toddlers explore what they can do with large barrels. They use their imagination to pretend they are boats and rockets. They act out going on journeys as they join in singing familiar songs with staff. Older children become immersed in their imaginary play as they pretend to go fishing. They imagine their long sticks are rods and build platforms so they can pretend to fish over the garden fence. Babies delight in exploring the sounds of different instruments. Children benefit from a range of opportunities to be creative and expressive.

Children behave well. They learn to take turns, listen and follow instructions. For example, when children plant sunflower seeds in the garden, they patiently wait for a turn to pour the water. They understand they need to make space for each of their friends to join in. They concentrate hard on carefully placing their seeds in soil. Children are considerate and thoughtful. They show high levels of engagement in all that they do and are well prepared for the next stages of their learning.

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

- Leaders create a broad and well-sequenced curriculum that builds on what children know and can do. Staff understand clearly what they want children to learn from the experiences they provide. They check children's development and plan appropriate activities to ensure they close any gaps in learning. As a result, all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress.
- The manager ensures additional funding is spent appropriately. The manager has identified gaps in children's experiences and has spent funding to provide children with new learning opportunities. For example, they purchased live chicks and caterpillars to look after at the nursery. Staff support children to learn about growth and how to take care of living creatures. They share information about children's experiences with parents to encourage and enhance their learning at home.
- Staff actively encourage a love of reading. Children look at books independently. They cuddle with staff as they share a familiar story. Children fill in the missing words to phrases as staff read 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. They talk about the characters and what is about to happen next.
- Staff ensure children hear and learn to use a wide and varied vocabulary. For example, children learn the words 'rosemary', 'coriander' and 'parsley' as they smell the different herbs. Staff check their knowledge and give them

opportunities to practise using these new words as they later mix the herbs with dough.

- Staff support children to make healthy choices. They teach children about oral health. They show them how to brush their teeth and teach them how long they should do this for. Staff encourage children to be physically active. They enthusiastically lead children in a morning exercise routine. Children have lots of fun copying the movements and noticing the affect this has on their bodies.
- Leaders have spent time training staff in developing their delivery of mathematics. They focus on ensuring children gain a firm understanding of numbers one to five and develop the skills to accurately count. For instance, children match the numeral on a key to the number of dots they count on a padlock. They develop their hand-to-eye coordination and small-muscle skills, as they concentrate on carefully holding the small keys and placing them in the locks.
- Pre-school age children take part in short group times. They listen and pay attention to the information staff share. Staff engage the children in conversations and give children time to answer questions and share their thoughts. However, when children ask more challenging questions, staff sometimes struggle to answer them. They do not always explore ways to extend and deepen the children's understanding and thinking to an even higher level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a firm understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They receive effective training and keep their knowledge up to date. For instance, staff know the reporting procedures they must follow if they have a concern about the welfare of a child. They are able to recognise possible signs that may indicate a child is at risk from harm. Staff have knowledge of safeguarding issues that are relevant to their local area. They take steps to ensure the nursery is safe and secure. For example, staff risk assess the classrooms and outdoor area to minimise hazards and uphold a safe environment for children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff support and help them to understand how to respond to children's questions and develop their thinking and understanding further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY481578
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10228101
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	53
Number of children on roll	76
Name of registered person	United Learning Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP532264
Telephone number	01295 254477
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2016

Information about this early years setting

NOA's Ark Nursery registered in 2014. It is located on the site of the North Oxfordshire Academy in Banbury, Oxfordshire. It is open on weekdays, for 51 weeks of the year, from 8am until 6pm. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 14 members of staff who work with children. Of these, nine hold relevant childcare qualifications and the manager holds early years teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Alice M Roberts

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 their evaluation of the setting.
- Children spoke to the inspector throughout the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She viewed relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity and discussed the teaching and learning.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk of the nursery and discussed the curriculum.

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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