

Inspection of The Ark Preschool

Howden Clough Methodist Church, Nab Lane, Birstall, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 0HU

Inspection date: 28 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 are welcomed to the pre-school by happy and friendly staff. They leave their parents and carers at the door, hang their coats up and quickly become engaged in their play. Children form positive relationships with all staff. They go to their key person for cuddles and reassurance when needed. Children feel safe and secure. Their behaviour is good. Children follow the routines of the pre-school. They promptly stop what they are doing when they hear the tambourine. Children listen carefully and follow instructions when asked to come and sit together for group time or to get ready for snack time.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of children. They plan a curriculum which includes extending children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Children use a globe to identify the different countries. They learn new language. For example, children learn that paper becomes 'saturated' when they pour too much water on it, and how the paper 'absorbs' the water. Staff use the words 'horizontal' and 'vertical' when playing a board game. Children learn simple signs. They use these freely as they talk. This helps all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to feel included. Children are confident communicators.

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

- Leaders and managers have a clear overview of the strengths and areas of development of the pre-school. They evaluate practice and put plans in place to improve practice when a problem occurs. The use of funding is effective to support children's learning. Children's views are sought and considered.
- Children show high levels of concentration and are engaged in their play. Younger children take delight in mixing colours with paint, while older children skilfully use a paintbrush to paint each section of a paper plate. Children develop their fine motor skills needed for writing.
- Staff plan activities which take account of children's interests. However, the purpose of some activities does not always support the developing needs of the younger children. This means that not all children fully benefit from the activities provided.
- Children are welcomed at group time by their names. This helps children to feel included and have a sense of identity. Children sit quietly and listen to staff. They join in, answer questions and share their knowledge about the world around them. For example, children tell the group they have been on an aeroplane.
- Children develop a love of stories and books. Staff read with expression and enthusiasm. Children listen intently, and excitedly join in with repeated phrases from a familiar story.

- Staff model the use of numbers well. They take every opportunity to count with children. For example, staff count the children in a line, the counters in a game and how many scoops of sand they use to fill a bucket. Children develop a good understanding of number.
- The support for children with SEND is excellent. Caring, attentive staff ensure that children with SEND have their individual needs met. Tailored one-to-one support makes sure that children's individual needs are met. Staff identify gaps in children's learning and put plans in place. The pre-school works with outside agencies effectively to support the needs of children with SEND.
- Children develop their independence skills. They learn to put their own coats on, wash their hands and cut fruit for their snack. Children follow the routines of the pre-school. However, during some routines, such as lining up to wash their hands and at snack time, children are waiting for long periods of time with little to do. At these times, some children become bored and inactive.
- Parents are very complimentary about the setting and comment that their children enjoy attending. Children make good progress since starting, particularly with their language development. Families feel very well supported. They comment the pre-school is 'amazing' in the support they are receiving to ensure that their children have the necessary plans in place for moving on to school.
- Staff support children to use digital technology to support their learning. For example, they use a laptop to look at pictures of the earth. However, staff do not always teach children about how to use the technology safely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a strong understanding of how to safeguard children. All staff have training in safeguarding. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and are clear in the procedures to follow to protect children from harm. A clear recruitment and induction procedure is in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff have the necessary support when starting at the pre-school. Staff use risk assessments to make sure that the premises are safe and secure. Any patterns or risks are identified, and plans are put in place to ensure the safety of children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen all staff's understanding of the learning intention for planned activities, to enable them to consider the learning needs of the younger children
- review and enhance the organisation of the daily routine to ensure that children do not spend long periods of time waiting

- support children to learn and understand how to use digital technology safely.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2638605
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10281221
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Stay 'N' Play Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP531599
Telephone number	07895510516
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Preschool registered in 2021 and is located in Batley, West Yorkshire. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens during term time, from 9am until midday, Monday to Friday. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Miriam Caldecott

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The nominated individual provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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