

# Inspection of The Exwick Ark

The Old School, Exwick Road, EXETER EX4 2AT

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Inspection date:

13 March 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

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## **Requires improvement**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision requires improvement

Children are happy at this calm and friendly nursery. Behaviour is good. Children benefit from good relationships with the kind and caring staff. Staff patiently teach babies to share. Older children play alongside each other and take turns using equipment. Children focus well on their activities. They delight as they take part in singing songs. They play with wooden train sets and care for toy cats in the role-play area. They paint alongside their friends in the toddler room. Staff enthusiastically explain activities and regularly praise children as they play. However, children's personal development is not consistently good. For example, staff do not build on good practice in the baby room or provide enough opportunities for the older children to gain their independence.

At times, leadership and management do not work cohesively, which results in weaknesses in practice. However, managers support staff to ensure children take part in a wide range of experiences. Older children benefit from weekly forest school sessions, where they develop curiosity about the world around them. They learn about other cultures and languages as part of special activities, such as learning Spanish. Parents share their expertise with the staff and children. For example, the provide exciting cooking activities during Chinese New Year.

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

- Leaders and managers do not always work cohesively to share information. Inconsistencies in record-keeping mean that information is not easily shared between the management team. For example, they do not always keep an accurate record of verbal feedback to other agencies. However, they monitor safeguarding concerns and contact outside agencies when required for advice. As a result, there is not a significant impact on children's well-being or safety.
- Leaders support staff in their professional development. The manager carries out regular observations of staff practice. She recognises the strengths of individual staff and that teaching is good overall, particularly in the baby room. However, she does not focus sharply enough on raising practice in the toddler and pre-school rooms to an even higher standard.
- Staff have created a well-organised and purposeful environment. Staff ensure that children have access to a wide range of activities that promote learning across all areas of the early years curriculum. For example, babies relish the opportunity to play with plastic balls in shaving foam. Children benefit from regular play times in the large, well-equipped outdoor areas.
- Staff encourage babies to be independent. They support their skills effectively, such as how to pour their own drinks from a jug. Babies excitedly help to tidy away their toys and put them in the baskets. However, staff provide fewer opportunities for older children to do things for themselves and gain the skills

they need for moving on to school.

- The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) puts in appropriate measures to support children with SEND and makes prompt referrals to the appropriate outside agencies. Effective new starter processes ensure children with SEND settle quickly.
- Staff prioritise the teaching of communication and language. They encourage children to talk about what they are doing as they sit and play with them. Staff teach children new vocabulary effectively. For example, they describe objects as 'shiny' to babies as they play with the sensory toys. Staff use sign language to communicate with younger children and those with SEND.
- The key-person system is effective. Staff know their key children well and talk with confidence about the progress they are making. They share next steps with other staff and provide parents with ideas on how they can support their children at home.
- Parent partnerships are good. Parents feel welcome in the nursery and well supported. They appreciate the daily updates they are given on their children's progress and comment on the secure relationships their children have with staff.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the nursery. However, these do not have a significant impact on children's safety and welfare, as the manager seeks safeguarding advice as needed. Staff complete regular safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge is up to date. They are able to discuss the signs and symptoms of abuse. They have a good understanding of wider safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation and 'Prevent' duty. Staff know the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against another member of staff. Leaders follow safer recruitments practices, ensuring that new staff are suitable to work with children.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
maintain records to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting and to help ensure that the needs of all children are met.	27/03/2023

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

- tailor professional development opportunities to ensure staff have the skills to support children to an even higher standard so that children make the best possible progress
- improve opportunities for toddlers and pre-school children to increase their independence and gain the personal skills they need to move on to the next stage in their development.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY466130
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10281761
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	54
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	90
<b>Name of registered person</b>	The Exwick Ark Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP903483
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 425551
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 June 2018

## Information about this early years setting

The Exwick Ark registered in 2013. It is a privately run nursery and is open each weekday, from 7.45am until 5.45pm, all year round. It receives funding for the provision of early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 23 members of staff, including the two owners. Of these, 20 work directly with children. The manger holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4. Of the remaining staff, four hold qualified teacher status, two have early years professional status, 12 hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is unqualified.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspectors

Leanne Edge  
Jemma Honey

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager and the lead inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The SENDCo spoke to an inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The lead inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspectors.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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