

Inspection of The Ark Day Nursery and Preschool

Capital House, Norwich Road, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6JX

Inspection date: 17 March 2023

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 arrive happy and are warmly welcomed by friendly staff. They settle quickly and become absorbed in activities that interest them. Children show focus and motivation. Toddlers paint their own pictures. They become engrossed in rolling vehicles in paint. They experiment with flicking paintbrushes to create a different effect. Babies expertly use their fingers to scoop sand when filling containers. They demonstrate a sense of achievement, saying, 'Ta da,' as they show staff what they have done. Pre-school children hunt for pretend minibeasts in soil. They find the crickets and tell their friends, 'This has long legs.' Pre-school children initiate their own problem-solving ventures. They predict which toy cars are the fastest and push cars down slides to test out their ideas.

Children play closely with staff and involve them in their play. For example, they explore play food and ask them, 'What do you want for your tea party?' Children show that they are happy and secure. Babies approach staff for a hug when they are tired. They clamber onto their laps and cuddle closely. Toddlers proudly show staff pasta 'necklaces' they have made. Pre-school children sit enthralled as staff engage them in phonics games to make 'silly soup'.

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

- Staff provide a rich environment with a variety of meaningful learning opportunities. They make ongoing assessments about children's learning and quickly identify gaps in development. Staff take prompt action to close these gaps and, as a result, children make good progress.
- Children's independence is promoted. Babies roll up their own sleeves and wash their hands ready for snack. Toddlers serve themselves pasta and vegetables at lunchtimes. Pre-school children put on their own coats and show proficiency in managing zips. Staff tell children to 'have another go'. This helps to support children's growing resilience.
- Staff supervise children closely to ensure their safety. They are vigilant in ensuring play areas remain safe and suitable. For example, staff use cones as a barrier to areas of wet grass to prevent children from slipping. Children show an awareness of dangers. They remind each other to have 'walking feet'. They wear cycle helmets when riding scooters and tell their friends, 'It is for safety.'
- Children have good opportunities to play outside and be active. Pre-school children expertly use tricycles and scooters. They speed around obstacles and change direction as part of their game. Babies crawl and lift themselves up into standing positions. Toddlers whizz down slides. Pre-school children show kindness to younger children. They hold their hands to help them climb ladders.
- Parents say staff are 'supportive' and 'fantastic'. They report that their children are excited to attend the nursery and are making 'great progress'. Parents

appreciate the wide range of activities the nursery provides. They value the feedback they receive through daily handovers and an online platform.

- The nursery owner and manager form a strong team. They share a clear vision for what they want to achieve and have implemented changes to further drive improvement. For example, new curriculum planning systems and peer observations have been introduced. Staff have access to a wide range of training and support. They say they feel fully supported and are happy in their roles.
- Children's behaviour is very good. They play calmly next to each other and show an awareness of expectations. Babies help to tidy away toys. Toddlers line up at the door to go outside. Pre-school children sit quietly on the carpet for group activities. Staff use every opportunity to reinforce manners and politeness. However, staff do not always manage daily routines effectively to ensure learning time is fully maximised and children stay focused. For example, children wait for extended periods of time while staff bring food to the tables and this results in children becoming restless.
- Children benefit from regular opportunities to sing songs and read books. Pre-school children search bookshelves for their favourite stories. Toddlers take an active part in singing. Babies babble and repeat familiar words. However, staff do not always maximise all opportunities to promote children's language development. For example, they do not always engage babies in meaningful interactions during nappy changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff understand their roles to safeguard children. They know the different types of abuse and the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. They show an awareness of issues that may affect the children in their care, including wider safeguarding concerns, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff know how to identify and report concerns regarding the behaviour of an adult. The manager ensures that all staff complete training to keep their knowledge of safeguarding up to date. She tests their knowledge using regular questions. Robust recruitment and induction systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the organisation of routines so that children's play and learning time are maximised
- support staff to maximise all opportunities to extend children's communication and language development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2625274
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10280853
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	58
Number of children on roll	45
Name of registered person	Golden Apples Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP552696
Telephone number	01953881829
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Day Nursery and Preschool registered in 2021 and is located in Watton, Norfolk. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 to 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays and Christmas. 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

Helen Oakden

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- Staff and children spoke to the inspector at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their opinions.
- The inspector 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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