

# Inspection of The Exwick Ark

The Old School, Exwick Road, EXETER EX4 2AT

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Inspection date:

21 February 2024

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## Overall effectiveness

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## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

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

### The provision requires improvement

Children are happy and secure in the care of the warm, welcoming and friendly staff. The children separate from their parents with ease as they arrive at the nursery and form strong attachments to staff. For example, they hug staff affectionately in greeting and babies and toddlers are happy to see the staff when they wake from their naps. Children behave well and listen to and follow staff's instructions.

Staff provide an inviting and well-resourced environment for children to explore. However, staff working with the two-year-old and pre-school children do not meet their needs as effectively as they do for the babies and toddlers. Staff do not consistently provide targeted support that builds on what the two-year-old and pre-school children know and can do during group activities and through their interactions with the children. Staff do not provide extra attention and help to some children when they initially identify that they may benefit from additional support. Staff encourage the babies and toddlers to be curious. The youngest children are keen to explore and learn and they concentrate well. Babies frequently request that staff continue with activities even when they have ended, eagerly signing for 'more'.

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

- Leaders do not provide effective support and coaching for staff to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, the quality of education that children receive is variable. The learning intentions that staff plan for two-year-old and pre-school children are not always well matched to the children's learning needs. This means that some children do not receive targeted support from staff and do not engage in their play and learning deeply.
- Babies and toddlers benefit from positive early experiences at the nursery. They form close bonds with the staff, who meet their individual needs promptly and sensitively. Staff model language for them and encourage them to use words and babble. Staff engage these children in stimulating activities, which helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff know the children well. They work closely with parents and other agencies when children require external input to meet their individual needs. However, at times, staff target children's needs less effectively once they recognise slight delays in the children's development. For example, although staff identify children who would benefit from some additional support and attention to develop their communication and language, these children spend too long playing alone. Some gaps in children's learning do not close as swiftly as they could.
- The quality of staff's interactions with children is inconsistent. There are some

positive interactions between the staff and the two-year-old and pre-school children, but overall, the staff do not encourage the children to respond to their questions verbally or to use more than single words in their conversations with staff. This does not help to develop the children's speech and social skills. Staff do not routinely support the pre-school children to talk to each other and form friendships, so many of them play alone or alongside others.

- Staff help children to manage their self-care skills and to become confident. For example, they support children to use cutlery from a young age, and encourage the two-year-old and pre-school children to put on their shoes and coat independently. Older children call out 'I did it!' proudly when they succeed and take books to visitors to request they read to them.
- Children are keen to have a go and take part in activities. Two-year-old children eagerly listen to staff during singing activities and persist as they try to use scissors to cut paper during their self-chosen play. Pre-school children excitedly hunt for hidden toys and explore the outdoor environment during forest school sessions.
- Leaders and staff share regular updates with parents about their children's care and experiences and work closely to support the children's families. Parents speak highly about the relationships their children form with staff.
- At times in the two-year-old and pre-school room, staff do not organise the transitions between routines and activities effectively, such as at mealtimes and when getting children ready to play outside. As a result, the children sometimes spend a long time waiting without any stimulation.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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

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

	Due date
improve staff's interactions with two-year-old and pre-school children to develop the children's speech and language and help to engage them more deeply in their play and learning	20/03/2024

improve support and coaching for staff to develop their practice and skills, with particular regard to ensuring they plan clear intentions to challenge children and extend their learning	20/03/2024
ensure staff provide targeted help and support for children who have delays in their development to help them make good progress.	20/05/2024

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

- support the pre-school children to develop their social skills as they play and to form friendships
- review and develop the organisation of routines to make transitions quicker and reduce the amount of time children spend waiting.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY466130
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10284666
<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 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	52
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	109
<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>	13 March 2023

## 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. The setting is in receipt of funding for children aged two, three and four years. There are currently 18 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2 and five staff hold degree-level qualifications.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Sarah Madge

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager, provider and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children to take account of their feedback.
- The inspector spoke with the provider and manager about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager, provider and the inspector carried out joint observations during group activities.

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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