



## **The Ark Pre-school**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY219114
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Steer
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Ark Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Ark Pre-school opened in 2002. It operates from three rooms, at the Christian Out Reach Centre, close to Boundary Road, Portslade. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.45 during school term times.

There are currently 32 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from a wide

catchment area. The setting currently supports two children with special educational needs and one child who speaks English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of the staff two members, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and an additional two are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a positive attitude to leading a healthy lifestyle, which includes physical exercise as they participate in a wide range of daily activities. They gain control of their bodies as they negotiate the climbing frame, crawl in and out of the tent and enjoy stopping and starting the bicycles as they pedal through the traffic lights. Children's hand and eye co-ordination is good. For example, they are skilful when playing throwing games, eagerly aiming bean bags to land on targets. Children demonstrate confidence and balance as they hop competently from one leg to two during a popular game of Hopscotch.

Meal times are sociable occasions as staff take the opportunity to sit with the children and talk about the food. They discuss, for example the fresh fruit having pips and vitamins, and being healthy. Children are encouraged to become independent as they pour their own drinks and pass the food to each other at snack time. However, children do not have the opportunity to help themselves to drinks at other times during the session. As a result, some children remain thirsty, particularly after physical activity.

Children begin to learn about the importance of good personal hygiene practices through everyday routines. They know, for example to wash their hands after using the toilet and messy play. However, children are not encouraged to wash either their hands or faces after eating, resulting in them playing, and going home unclean.

A clear sickness policy is shared with parents so they know when to keep their children at home, which protects other's from infectious illness. Children are suitably cared for in the event of minor accidents as some staff have appropriate first aid qualifications.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. Risk of accidental injury is minimised as staff monitor safety arrangements regularly and take steps to reduce hazards. For instance, they complete a daily risk assessment of the physical play area and take part in regular fire practises. There are clear and efficient systems in place which ensure the safe arrival and collection of children.

The children play in a well organised, spacious environment which is bright and welcoming. The staff have carefully arranged the room so that children have ample space to move around safely, or rest and be quiet according to their needs. The children play with good quality resources which have been carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for them. They begin to develop an awareness of keeping themselves and each other safe, for instance notices remind them to 'pick up toys from the floor so people don't trip on them'.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have any concerns about a child in their care.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the pre-school setting. They benefit from stable relationships with the consistent staff members who look after them. They arrive happily and settle well, making independent choices in their play. They are keen to learn and encouraged to try out new skills, which fosters their emotional wellbeing and helps them achieve. Younger children learn from a range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced. They delight in choosing hands on activities, such as dressing up and building models with construction. This captures their interest and provides many opportunities to explore and experiment, effectively supporting the children's progress across all areas of learning.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and support children's progress through the stepping stones. They plan and provide a wide range of meaningful activities and experiences to include children of all abilities, and cover all areas of learning. However, this is not always put in to practice, as the expectations during some activities are the same for all children. Children enjoy getting fully involved in themed activities which are well planned and presented, with positive learning intentions and which arouse their natural curiosity. Some of the topics evolve from personal interests, such as learning about Poland with visits from a Polish member of their church. Staff are well deployed to support and guide children's learning, as they move freely around to choose their favourite activity. However, due to the short duration of the free play session, children do not have sufficient time to fully explore and benefit from what has been provided.

Children have warm and friendly relationships with both staff and each other, which gives them the confidence to ask questions in order to develop their thinking. They are confident speakers, for example approaching staff to say 'come here and see what I made'. Children are encouraged to see to their personal needs such as washing their hands, getting an apron and helping themselves to tissues. Children enjoy books, choosing favourites to look at, imitating staff as they hold the book up to 'read' to each other. They express themselves through mark making, as they write shopping lists during role play. Children enjoy being creative. They cut and glue to create collage flags and use a shoe to represent a mobile telephone during role play.

Children learn about early mathematics in familiar contexts as they are integrated into daily routines. They learn to count their fingers at circle time, compare and match numbers on computer games and use recognisable shapes to find their place at the table for snack and lunch. During water play children develop an understanding of volume and capacity, pouring from one container to another, seeing how many spoonfuls it takes to fill a container. Children show an interest in the world around them as they visit the local shops to smell, buy and taste a variety of spices, as they learn about how other people live. They learn about the past, present and future as they study pictures of themselves engaged in activities and follow the sequence of daily events on a pictorial timetable.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

A very friendly and welcoming atmosphere welcomes children and their families to the pre-school. Partnership with parents is good. Children are visited in their own homes before starting, which helps begin a trusting three-way relationship and eases the settling in process. Parents share information about their children which helps staff meet their individual needs. The staff keep parents well informed about their children's progress and development through newsletters, daily informal discussions with staff and viewing the children's individual records. All of which provide parents with details of forthcoming events and the Foundation Stage

Children behave well, they share and take turns, playing together harmoniously. Staff are calm and consistent, reinforcing and praising children's good behaviour, encouraging their feelings of self-worth. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through the range of planned activities. Resources represent diversity and encourage children to have a positive view of the wider world. Learning to recognise and value their own needs and those of other's, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with additional needs are welcomed into the inclusive environment. Systems are in place to ensure children are fully supported and their needs met through co-operation between staff, parents and outside agencies. For example, asking parents to suggest some useful words so children who speak more than one language are supported through the daily routines.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children feel comfortable and are at ease in the well-organised environment. All children receive good support from a consistent staff team that enjoy their company and know them well, helping them feel secure and confident. There are effective recruitment and induction procedures in place, which ensure only suitably experienced and qualified staff look after the children. All the required policies and procedures are in place to support children's welfare. However, the children's attendance is not correctly recorded to clearly indicate when they are present.

Leadership and Management is good. Staff work well as a team and clear communication allows them to provide a well-balanced programme of activities. Individual staff training needs are identified and staff attend a range of courses, which demonstrates their commitment to improving practice. Management evaluate the service provided in order to monitor and improve what is offered to the children. Staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage which enables them to plan a well-balanced range of activities in a rich learning environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the Pre-school have improved, and now carry out fire evacuation practises from all areas on a half-term basis, and a record is kept. Hazards in the physical play area are separated from children by a large screen.

Children's arrival is recorded, and times entered of children who arrive after normal session times or leave before the session ends. Further improvement is required to comply with the regulations.

The child protection policy has been amended to include a procedure for the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve personal hygiene procedures for children

- ensure the record of children's attendance includes the arrival and departure times
- ensure children have access to drinking water at all times

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- extend the opportunities for children to make full use of the range of activities provided
- ensure activities fully reflect the planning

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)