

The Ark Pre-school

c/o Citycoast Church, North Street, Portslade, BRIGHTON, BN41 1DG

Inspection date	15/03/2013
Previous inspection date	22/04/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff are skilled at using open questions to help children develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- The partnership with parents is strong because staff take time to regularly share children's achievements and parents can take a full part in the life of the pre-school
- The staff have a clear shared vision and make considered changes which bring about improvements in children's levels of involvement in activities.
- Children make good progress in their learning, because staff are passionate about addressing their identified next steps, particularly where children have additional needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- staff do not routinely use the outdoor learning environment for children to explore and investigate natural features or the effects of weather, reducing their opportunities to learn about the natural world.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager to discuss plans for the future.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator.

Inspector

Susan McCourt

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Ark Pre-school opened in 2002 and operates from three rooms at the Christian Outreach Centre, close to Boundary Road, Portslade. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm term-time only. The provider offers places for a maximum of 24 children at any one time. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. There are currently 37 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who are learning English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. They provide funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. Staff speak four languages between them.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop further the outdoor learning environment so that children can investigate natural features and the effects of weather to broaden their understanding of the world.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to support children's learning and development. They provide a rich and varied curriculum based on themes that children find interesting. Staff skilfully weave the areas of learning together. For example, in sports week, there is a wide range of physical activities that also encompass counting, measurement and early writing skills. This means that children with different learning styles make good progress in all areas of development.

Staff are very skilled at supporting children's communication and language development. They use sign language to reinforce their meaning when talking, and use a wide vocabulary. This extends children's language skills and they are strong communicators as a result. Children learn to solve problems independently as staff consistently use open questions to help children think. They also plan specific thought-provoking activities. For

example, they use a bucket with a hole in it so that children are intrigued to find ways to mend it, or explore what it will hold. This encourages children to actively explore and solve problems. Staff have strong teaching skills in using mathematical language to support children's thinking. They describe what is heavy, light, further and taller. Children learn positional language such as behind, under and inside. Staff carefully observe children's skills and achievements and plan tailored activities which help children achieve their next steps. This is particularly true of children who have any identified additional needs. Staff demonstrate a very clear commitment to facilitating children's particular next steps, and children make good progress as a result.

Staff use a tablet computer to photograph and note children's achievements. They use the document Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage to note the progress children are making relative to their expected developmental stage. This gives staff an accurate picture of children's progress given their starting points and capabilities. Children with identified additional needs enjoy teaching and support that is closely tailored to their needs and their progress is rapid as a result. All children's progress is regularly summarised and emailed to parents. Parents are invited to contribute to the record with photographs and information from home. This supports partnership working and children enjoy consistent care as a result.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children benefit from a very effective key person system. Staff get to know the children very well and are clearly focused on their needs. They anticipate who may need special attention each day and stay alongside children who may be feeling anxious. As a result, children feel well supported and are soon confident to get involved in purposeful play. The indoor learning environment supports children's independence. Toys and equipment are within easy reach and children can set their own challenges. For example, children spontaneously arrange furniture to make beds, find the doctor's kit and act out narrative role play. Staff create a calm and supportive atmosphere. They make skilful judgements about when to intervene to support play, such as stepping in to child-initiated play in the role of a doctor. The routine allows maximum time for free play and children can move freely between the indoor and outdoor learning environment. Outdoors, children can engage in activities that cover the whole curriculum. The area is well used overall, and children relish the opportunity to play daily in the fresh air. However, it does not include daily opportunities for children to investigate the natural world or the effects of weather, which reduces their opportunities to develop their understanding of their environment.

Children enjoy frequent physical activities and develop their own physical challenges. They skilfully use the climbing frame and attach ropes to climb the slide, alpine style. Children stretch to build towers from foam blocks and enjoy walks to local amenities such as the park. This means that they develop the habits of a healthy lifestyle. Children adopt good hygiene habits and eat a range of healthy foods at snack and mealtimes. Children learn about where in the world food comes from and enjoy different cooking activities. They

manage their personal care very well, with staff on hand to help them build skills in putting on coats and removing shoes. Children behave very well. They frequently cooperate in group activities such as building furniture out of foam pieces. They confidently share and take turns in activities such as making play dough from scratch. Children clearly understand that board games have rules and that following them helps everyone to play together. Children enjoy taking responsibility for tidying up and managing their belongings. This supports their independence and, overall, gives them good skills to support their move to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has a very clear and purposeful vision for the pre-school and has set ambitious targets for improvement. The staff team have a strong understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and focus their attention on the children's needs. Staff share the manager's vision and work closely together to reach their goals. For example, they have started new routines and planning methods, which have had a positive impact on children's levels of engagement with play. The manager regularly examines every child's development records so that she can monitor staff's work and the impact of the curriculum. She holds appraisal meetings and supervision sessions with staff so that their professional and personal development is promoted in a supportive atmosphere. This helps the team to attend relevant training, work well together and improves their practice.

The team have a good understanding of how to safeguard children. Clear policies and procedures guide staff as to how to report any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child. Staff demonstrate a thoughtful and considerate approach to supporting the whole family to improve children's well-being. They use social media sites and computer technology very carefully to share information while safeguarding children effectively. Staff are very careful of children's safety in the pre-school and minimise any identified hazards. They are also supportive of children taking measured risks in their play in order to learn new skills. For example, children stand on a chair in order to finish their tall tower of foam blocks with a member of staff close by.

The team have good partnerships with other professionals and agencies. For example, where children are referred to a speech and language therapist, staff work in partnership to ensure that their work with the children is consistent. They also work closely with school staff to help children make smooth transitions to school when the time comes. The team have built strong relationships with parents. Parents enjoy receiving the weekly newsletter and can see the range of activities on offer on a social media website. Parents can join the managing committee, volunteer in the pre-school and support different projects. This gives them good opportunities to take a full part in the life of the pre-school. Parents are extremely positive about the impact the pre-school has on their children. They describe staff as being a credit to the setting and other comments include, 'They are

fantastic, I can't fault them'.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY219114
Local authority	Brighton & Hove
Inspection number	846935
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	37
Name of provider	The Ark Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	22/04/2009
Telephone number	01273 433433

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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