

The Ark Pre-school

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



Inspection date	16 January 2017
Previous inspection date	15 March 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is exceptional. Children independently select resources and lead their play, using their imaginative skills to create complex role play and activities.
- The manager and staff make exceptional use of self-evaluation. They clearly identify improvements which include parents' and children's views to help raise the quality of the provision even further.
- The manager monitors the observations and assessments staff make and how they are used to skilfully help shape children's next steps in learning. Any gaps in learning are closed quickly, which enables all groups of children to make exceptional progress.
- Staff make extremely good use of opportunities to review the learning environment to provide activities that focus on children's interests. For example, they provided an array of different sized bricks when children showed an interest in building bridges. Children's behaviour is excellent.
- Support for children who have special educational needs is exceptional. Staff work with a number of early years professionals to help children to achieve their potential.
- Partnerships with parents are highly effective. Parents are very closely involved in reviewing their children's progress and they receive ideas to support home learning. Parents involve themselves in the pre-school, for example, through participation in activities and by sharing their experiences and their expertise.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- build further on opportunities to offer older children the highest levels of challenge to extend their learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector took part in a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector sampled a range of documents including safeguarding procedures, records of staff suitability checks and qualifications, and children's progress records.
- The inspector took the views of parents and children spoken to on the day of inspection into account.

Inspector

Janet Thouless

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

Safeguarding is effective. Staff have an exceptional understanding of the procedures that they should follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Safeguarding training is ongoing, establishing a culture of vigilance in the staff team to help keep children safe. This significantly enhances staff's understanding of their role and responsibility. Recruitment processes are rigorous and help to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Management and staff work closely to identify training that will have the most beneficial impact on children. For example, staff make excellent use of the outdoor learning environment to support those children who prefer to learn outdoors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff have an exceptional understanding of how children learn. They provide an excellent range of learning opportunities. For example, children explore the characters in their favourite books and enjoy pretend play. They dressed up for a tea party, invited a tiger and talked about what the tiger would enjoy for tea. This demonstrated their confidence in conversational skills. Children use their imaginations and investigative skills well. For example, staff supported them to explore objects that float or sink in water and they became highly excited as they recorded their findings. Staff play alongside children and extend their communication and language skills, for example, through excellent questioning techniques as to why some objects sink then float to the top. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to extend even further the level of challenge for the older children.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Staff give an exceptionally high priority to children's well-being. They form extremely warm and secure relationships with children. Settling-in arrangements are flexible and individual to children's and parents' needs. Children are extremely confident and self-assured in the setting. They gain an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. For example, they prepare healthy snack options and try a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Children enjoy frequent walks to the park and explore their surroundings. They jump in rain puddles, explore snowflakes and observe the effects of wind.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Children are making excellent progress in relation to their starting points. They play exceptionally well together, are thoughtful and show consideration to their friends. Children develop high levels of independence and confidence. For example, on arrival they confidently identify their names to self-register and choose what they want to play with. Children develop exceptional skills for their future learning and eventual move on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY219114
Local authority	Brighton & Hove
Inspection number	1061637
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	16
Name of registered person	The Ark Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520288
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2013
Telephone number	01273 433 444

The Ark Pre-school registered in 2002. It operates from City Coast Church, Portslade, Brighton. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm and offers an early bird session from 8.30am, during term time only. There are six members of staff. The manager is a qualified teacher and four staff hold level 3 childcare qualifications. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

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