

# The Ark Association Ltd (1)

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY439880
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/06/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Janice Walker

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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## **Description of the setting**

The Ark Association Ltd (1) is one of four provisions run by the same management group. It opened in 1984 and was re-registered in 2011 following a change in legal status to become a limited company. It operates from purpose-built, single-storey premises in Oakham, Rutland. There is ramped access to the main door. Children are cared for in two rooms, one of which has full length partitions which can be used to create two separate rooms. Children are cared for in age groups, moving up to the larger room at around aged two and a half, depending on their level of ability. There are bathroom and kitchen facilities on site along with a separate office and facilities for staff. Each room has direct access to a fully enclosed rear play area for outdoor play.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. Care is also provided for children before and after school up to the age of 11 years. There are currently 43 children on roll in the nursery provision. Funded early education for two, three and four-year-olds is provided. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Children attending mainly come from the Oakham area.

The provision is open during school term times only. Opening times are from 7.30am to 6pm. The kids club runs from 7.30am to 9am and 3.30pm to 6pm. Children can attend for flexible times depending on individual family needs. There are strong links with local schools. The provision employs 14 childcare staff, 10 of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The Ark Association Ltd (1) provides a warm and friendly environment for children and their families. Staff provide individual levels of support for children to help ensure that they are happy and secure in order that they feel able to express themselves and explore their learning environment. Along with the effective systems of planning and assessment, this ensures each child makes good progress in their learning and development. Strong links with other professionals and most other providers and positive relationships with parents support this well. Staff work together well to ensure the ongoing improvement of the provision and have established good systems of self-evaluation to assist this.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve learning opportunities in the outdoor area, for example, by using the Early Years Foundation Stage 'Effective practice: Outdoor Learning' guidance
- improve the systems for sharing children's development and learning records and any other relevant information with relevant practitioners for all children who attend other settings.

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

Children are well safeguarded. The premises are secure with restricted entry systems and clear procedures in place to ensure children are only collected by known adults. There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures which help ensure the suitability of staff who work with the children and clear procedures in place regarding the checking and supervision of visitors to the setting. Staff provide good levels of supervision as children move around the building, for example, when accessing the bathroom and when moving between in and outdoors. Clear and regularly reviewed policies and procedures are effectively implemented by the staff team which helps to ensure that children are safeguarded. The designated member of staff for health and safety oversees the risk assessment process which is effective in ensuring that potential hazards are identified and that routine daily checks are undertaken so that the building, toys and equipment are safe and ready for children's use. All staff attend training in relation to child protection and have a good understanding of their responsibilities within this area. Clear procedures are in place and made available to all staff.

Staff establish positive relationships with parents who speak highly of the staff team. They are kept well informed of current information through the use of notice boards and newsletters although parents state they value more the ongoing verbal exchanges. Staff provide them with written information about their child's identified next steps every eight weeks so that they can support their children's learning at home and they are encouraged to share their children's new achievements both verbally and through use of the 'I can' display board. All children are valued, there are sensitive, adaptable settling-in procedures and an identified key worker to support on an individual basis. Very good systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities with highly effective links with other professionals involved with these children, resulting in tailored learning and support for them. Effective sharing of information with settings where there is shared care means that there is consistency and continuity for children attending more than one provision although this is less successful for the early years children who are attending the out of school provision.

The staff team create a bright and welcoming environment and provide a wide selection of resources and interesting activities both indoors and outdoors. They are supported well and effectively led by the management team to ensure each child's needs are met effectively. Ongoing support through regular planning meetings and appraisals along with opportunities for training and encouragement to gain higher qualifications supports the development of their skills and knowledge. They make good use of reflective practice to identify the strengths of

their provision and areas for further development. This information feeds into the effective self-evaluation processes which helps to ensure the continual improvement of the provision as a whole.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

A bright and welcoming environment and a receptive and caring staff team greet children's arrival. Indoors, activity plans are effective in ensuring that good use is made of available space and that there are toys and activities which cover all areas of learning. There are labelled spaces for children's personal belongings, helping to establish a sense of belonging and this is supported by photographs of them at play and attractive displays of their work. Staff have clearly made some progress in developing the outdoor area where they have begun to establish zones for different areas of learning. However, space outdoors is not yet utilised as effectively as indoor space. For the older children, tools and equipment to support learning in the newly created zones are not as accessible as they could be and for all children, planning for the outdoor area is not yet given equal value to the planning of the indoor area in order to ensure that there are learning opportunities across all six areas. However, there are some interesting resources outdoors and free-flow is provided most of the day, particularly for the older children, and they move independently between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Good use is made of recyclable materials to support creative play and a group of boys have tremendous fun as they design and create a vehicle to tow using cardboard boxes and ropes. The rope causes difficulties in manoeuvring around objects and the children are given time and space to resolve these problems together through discussion and trial. Children thoroughly enjoy digging in the spacious sand tray, younger children explore the texture of the sand and those slightly older practise their co-ordination as they fill and empty moulds. There are effective systems in place for observing children and assessing and monitoring their progress. This information is effectively used to identify the next steps in their development and to influence planning. Planned activities therefore provide purposeful learning experiences and an appropriate level of challenge. In the after-school provision, the early years children are happy and settled. They enjoy a satisfying tea and then choose their own resources and engage in purposeful play. There is space for quieter, more relaxing activities if they wish.

High priority is given to children's safety and welfare needs. The key worker system is effective in helping children to establish trusting relationships which help them to settle in. They demonstrate a strong sense of security as they confidently make their needs known such as when they need to go to the toilet or when they want additional resources. They begin to learn about possible dangers and how to stay safe through simple but clear explanations from staff when appropriate; such as not to put the dried pasta in the role play area play in their mouths and to watch out for other children when playing with 'towing ropes' outdoors. Good standards of cleanliness are maintained and staff are vigilant in implementing hygiene routines such as cleaning tables prior to meals and cleaning of babies'

cots, these help to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Children's general good health is supported through daily routines which include good personal hygiene routines, regular times in the outdoor area for fresh air and physical activity which includes a weekly swimming session. Healthy eating is promoted well. Children are provided with snacks of fresh fruit and parents are able to choose to provide their children with a packed lunch or opt for a cooked meal at lunch time. Cooked meals are provided by a neighbouring school and comply with the local authority healthy eating guidelines and staff provide useful information for parents regarding healthy options for lunch boxes. Children behave very well; they are interested in the activities provided and receive good levels of attention from staff. During group activities they learn to share and take turns whilst also learning about differences in the wider world, for example, as they communicate through use of sign language. Welcome sessions are well planned to provide opportunities for children to speak in turn and listen to each other, to begin to learn about time and seasonal changes and to count and calculate. All in all they are beginning to gain the skills they will need to support their transition to school.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met