

# New Ark Play Association

New Ark Adventure Playground, Hill Close, Reeves Way, PETERBOROUGH, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5LZ

<b>Inspection date</b>	02/05/2013
Previous inspection date	09/11/2011

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because they are excited and motivated by the wide range of fun and stimulating activities available for them in this unique playgroup and eco centre. For example, children take part in an inspiring snack time around the eco fire.
- The playgroup adventure playground is a rich learning environment for children. They enjoy abundant opportunities to expand their imagination and develop physically and emotionally, such as den building.
- The highly innovative teaching methods mean children are animated and enthusiastic towards their learning about the natural world and living things. As a result, their communication and language develops rapidly and is exceptional.
- Children flourish because all members of staff know them very well. They are extremely sensitive to their individual needs and notice children who require extra support or reassurance. Children are confident to approach the staff to talk to them, subsequently their self-esteem and self-confidence is exceedingly well supported

## 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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of staff suitability, and a range of policies and record keeping procedures.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the day.
- The inspector observed activities throughout the association, in the playgroup, the eco centre, the farm and the adventure playground.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector observed the open access playground, after school activities.

## Inspector

Sharon Alleary

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

New Ark Play Association was registered in 1981. It is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in Peterborough, and is managed by a voluntary committee. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one main playroom and the eco centre, children also access the city farm onsite. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2. One member of staff has Qualified Teacher Status.

The playgroup opens on Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon and 12.30pm until 3pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions and have the opportunity to stay for a full day, bringing lunch with them. The association also offers care to children aged over five years to 16 years. This is open each weekday after school until 6pm. During the school holidays, the open access scheme is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 90 children attending. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special needs and/or disabilities.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to monitor and embed new systems to track and record children's progress, to ensure that assessments continue to be sharply focussed and children continue to maintain the very highest levels of achievements.

## Inspection judgements

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

Managers and staff have an excellent knowledge of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and an extremely good understanding of how children learn through their play and hands-on experiences. Staff have high expectations of themselves and the children, and provide a wealth of inspirational and imaginative play and learning experiences. As a result, children gain a vast array of key skills that fully support their readiness for school when the time comes. Opportunities to assess children's starting points and ongoing progress are well established and include all those involved in their learning. The staff team prepare detailed plans that cover all the areas of learning and

reflect children's individual interests. Children's next steps in learning are precisely identified and shared on the planning board to ensure all staff have a very good overview of all children in the setting, subsequently the next steps are purposefully incorporated into activities. As a consequence, children enjoy a busy and active time and make excellent progress in their learning and development. New systems to track and record children's progress through the areas of learning have recently been introduced and management are currently monitoring these to ensure that they remain highly effective. Systems for developing and delivering the progress check at age two are robust. This enables the views of parents to be gained, and subsequently provides early support for those children, who may need it.

Children are very keen to learn in the rich and exciting playgroup, farm, adventure playground and eco centre that support them across the prime and specific areas. They have ample opportunities throughout the sessions to make their own choices and decisions about what they do. For example, the staff provide a selection of jigsaws. Children excitedly complete as many puzzles as they can, attempting complex patterns and naming the shapes. This supports their understanding of shape and space. Children thoroughly enjoy the highly positive involvement from the staff in their activities. They laugh together as staff tease them by saying, 'Are we ready to go to sleep now?' This warm and genuine interaction actively promotes children's feelings of self-confidence and value. The outdoor environment in the eco centre and the adventure playground enables children of all ages to have freedom to explore, be physically active and have first-hand experiences of the seasons and weather. For example, children excitedly put on wet gear and wellington boots in preparation for their outdoor exploration to hunt for sticks and kindling for a fire to make popcorn. Children have opportunities to develop their large muscle control and coordination as they climb, run, jump and sweep down the zip line in the adventure playground. Staff provide endless opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts and ideas as they explore the highly stimulating outdoor environment, especially the eco centre. They investigate new and interesting items that promote their curiosity and thinking skills. For example, children collect natural objects as they take part in a spring walk, where they discover, bluebells, blossom, daffodils, grass and daisies. Staff extend children's vocabulary as they discuss where items come from and what they feel like.

Children develop their listening and attention skills as they become thoroughly engrossed in a book that links to their current topic of spring. They point out a windmill and comment, 'Wind helps it to turn around, if it's hot, it stops.' Children consistently express themselves articulately and knowledgeably. Imaginative play is inspirational for children as they pretend to be pirates on the 'high sea'. They leave the 'boat' to seek for hidden treasure, carefully removing their map from their pocket, counting steps and looking under tree stumps for the concealed rings. Staff are excellent at extending children's learning through play. Activities, such as this provide many opportunities for physical development, recognition of mathematics, literacy and expressive arts. Understanding the world lies at the heart of children's learning. With the association's Forest School ethos, children enjoy a wealth of opportunities to experience nature first hand. For example, the on-site farm provides children with excellent chances to handle and feed the vast array of birds and animals, such as, goats, sheep, guinea pigs and ducks. 'Dotty' the rabbit and 'Mocha' the guinea pig are particular favourites for all the children.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well as staff work closely with their families and other professionals, such as the paediatrician. Visual props, such as signs and symbols, support those children who communicate non-verbally. Children who speak English as an additional language, are supported extremely well through excellent partnerships with parents. Staff obtain words in children's home language and provide dual language books to help to develop children's understanding of English. Key words on signs in their home language promote children's feeling of belonging in the playgroup. Prior to starting the setting, parents have settling-in sessions with their child's key person to gather useful information. Staff use this opportunity to find out about the children from their parents and to begin to build positive relationships with them and their families. Parents may see and contribute to their child's 'learning journeys' at any time. They contain regular contributions from parents about children's achievements at home. Parents and carers are extremely well-informed about their children's activities and routines through daily whiteboard exchanges and regular newsletters. Children are invited to borrow books to use at home. Highly successful strategies engage all parents in their children's learning at the playgroup and at home.

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

Children settle quickly to play when they arrive because the staff are highly skilled in engaging them in their activities. Throughout the association, children are extremely happy. They are highly confident as they engage in conversations and welcome visitors, including volunteer helpers from the community. Staff offer lots of positive praise and recognition for children's efforts and achievements. They are very attentive to the children as they listen to their requests and are fully aware of their individual needs, supporting very secure emotional attachments. For example, children who have returned from a long break spend quality time with their key person, settling back into the playgroup routine. Behaviour is exemplary and children really enjoy playing and cooperating together. Staff have a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. The uniqueness of the association results in children having reasonable, clear expectations, which means that they learn to respect and care about each other, the environment, living things and think about the feelings of others.

A high emphasis is placed on developing self-care and independence; this means children are able to address their personal care needs. They know to wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom. This demonstrates an excellent awareness and understanding of their own needs and personal hygiene. Children are encouraged to be independent, as they delight in the opportunity to act as a helper at snack time. Each child is given a specific role, which they take great pleasure in carrying out. For instance, they slowly and carefully take turns to collect plates, cups and snacks. They are relaxed and happy as they chat to each other and staff. This social affair prompts chats about healthy eating, as children comment, 'Water is healthy for you, so is salad and smoothies.' On the other hand, a completely different snack experience is offered in the eco centre. Staff and children prepare the fire to make popcorn. The children sit around the fire and listen carefully for the first corn to pop. This is a highly social occasion, as conversations are prompted about visits to the cinema and films seen. Communication and language is

animated and lively. Children hold their cups carefully as they sip hot chocolate and eat fruit before sampling the finished popcorn.

The adventure playground is a popular choice for all children. As a result, they benefit from excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills and to access fresh air each day. All children manage risks exceptionally well as they climb trees and scale the high climbing frame. Once at the top, children shout, 'Look at me, I can lean back.' Close supervision ensures children assess their own risks and challenges to keep them safe. For instance, sensitive discussions debate why it is better to hold on than to lean back. The eco centre places utmost priority on the safety of children. For instance, children discuss the excellent practice they need to consider when the fire is being lit. They tell staff they will stand by the fire post and wait for a helper to take them onto a seat, where they have 'glue on their bottoms to keep them safe.'

Children who attend the open access adventure playground after school have smooth transitions as they are mostly children who have attended the playgroup and eco centre. Children's transition to school is greatly eased as the manager places the utmost priority on developing good links with primary schools. Teachers visit the children in the association to help them become familiar with each other so they feel secure. When children move between the association, such as the eco centre to the playgroup, they share a key person; these key persons are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children to feel secure in a variety of situations.

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

The managers and staff work exceptionally well together and share a full understanding of their responsibilities to meet the learning and development requirements. They are effective in monitoring the delivery of the educational programmes through regular discussions and team meetings where they are all fully involved. This involvement of the whole staff team alongside their extensive knowledge and commitment ensures that all children's needs are met most effectively. Individual managers and staff place utmost priority on ensuring that the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are implemented. The highly comprehensive policies and procedures underpin practice within the association and are clearly understood and implemented by all. Safeguarding is given the highest priority. All the staff have completed training in first aid and safeguarding and they fully understand the importance of following the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in the event of any concerns. Highly comprehensive risk assessments, which are consistently implemented, keep children safe both inside and outdoors. Daily health and safety checks ensure a day-to-day rigorous safety assessment.

Well-established recruitment and vetting procedures mean that staff undergo robust suitability checks and have completed training or are willing to do so. All staff complete a thorough induction process to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. The association welcomes volunteer helpers from the community and the local colleges, robust procedures ensure that these individuals are suitable to work alongside children. The staff

turnover at the association is very low and most of the staff have been employed for many years. Nonetheless, the dedication and passion for early years education is relentless and self-improvement and efficiency is an ongoing process. Parents fill in questionnaires and comment on the provision, but those spoken to at the inspection say there is nothing they want to change as they are extremely happy with everything. The local early years advisor makes regular visits to the association and plays an important role in supporting them with improvements and the monitoring of the provision since the last inspection. With her guidance, managers work on specific targets for improvement. A broad range of monitoring and performance management tools help managers to effectively support staff. As a result, any practice or training issues are quickly identified and addressed. In addition, managers and staff work incredibly well together and pay high regard to each other's strengths and areas of expertise. Therefore, they create a very supportive and positive environment for children to play and learn.

Association staff liaise with the other settings that children may attend, such as a childminder. This means there is continuity of care and their learning is complemented. The managers and key persons work effectively with others, such as health professionals. Consequently, robust systems support any specific health requirements and the identification and inclusion of any child with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents are invited to view their child's 'learning journey' and to have a personal chat with their key person through regular invitations and an open door policy. Meetings are flexible to include those parents who may have other commitments. This ensures that children receive a consistent approach and that all parents are fully valued and respected. Parents and carers report highly complimentary comments about the pre-school. They comment on the welcoming environment and how friendly and welcoming the staff are towards them and their children.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	256791
<b>Local authority</b>	Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	910391
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	64
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	90
<b>Name of provider</b>	New Ark Play Association Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	09/11/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 340 605

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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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