

# The Ark Association Ltd (1)

Princess Avenue, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6PQ

<b>Inspection date</b>	26/02/2014
Previous inspection date	13/06/2012

<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		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

- Close bonds have formed between key persons, children and their families, which helps children to feel a good sense of security and confidence in the setting.
- Children make good progress, their development is well monitored and their next steps in learning accurately identified and planned for through a broad range of activities.
- Children are safeguarded well in the setting due to the strong partnerships that have formed with families, other providers and outside professionals, who work closely together to meet children's needs.
- The setting is led and managed well. Management monitor the educational programmes effectively and ensure staff are supported in their training and professional development.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Play spaces for two-year-olds and pre-school children have recently been separated into two rooms for morning sessions. As a result, full consideration has not been given to the pre-school room, so that children in this room can enjoy books.
- There is scope to improve the opportunities for children who speak English as an additional language to see and hear their home language in their play.

## 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 observed children's activities in the baby room, two-year-old room, pre-school room and the outside learning environments.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and spoke at appropriate times to staff throughout the sessions.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day of the inspection.

## Inspector

Carly Mooney

## Full report

### Information about the setting

The Ark Association Ltd (1) setting was registered again in 2011 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in the area of Oakham, Rutland and is one of two Ark Association settings. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The setting employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The setting opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 76 children attending, 67 of whom are in the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational 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:

- enhance pre-school children's access to books to enable them to sit and enjoy looking at them to further develop their literacy skills
  
- increase opportunities for children with English as an additional language to see and hear that language in the setting.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements and how children learn through play. Staff form close bonds with their key children and plan effectively for their individual needs. They interact closely with children during activities and show a good understanding of varied teaching methods that engage their interest. For example, children who are highly engaged in a shape hammering activity, learn to take responsibility for themselves, as they carefully hammer the nail into a board. They are supported well by staff who encourage discussions about the shapes and colours and whether the shapes are the same or different. Children are introduced to more complex shapes, such as a parallelogram and its features, while also strengthening their vocabulary with a new word. Children use their imagination well during the activity, constructing recognisable pictures of flowers and houses using the shapes. Play spaces are generally organised well. Babies freely explore their environment, which is bright and welcoming.

However, recent changes to the morning sessions, which separates the two-year-olds from the pre-school children has resulted in the eldest children sometimes having less opportunity to easily access a variety of resources. For example, during the inspection, some books were not easily accessible and children did not have a defined area that encouraged them to want to look at books in a purposeful way.

Children's prior knowledge, skills and understanding are gathered from parents when they start at the setting and the information used to plan effectively from the beginning. Staff use a specialised computer application to record their observations and assessments of children's learning. A suitable tracking system is also in place to ensure children are making good progress in their learning and are well prepared for their next stage of their life, such as starting school. Parents are able to access their children's observation records through the online application whenever they wish and are able to share information about learning from home in this way. Progress is also shared formally in parents' meetings twice a year.

Children's communication skills are fostered well by staff who understand the importance of children being able to convey their wants and needs. For example, staff talk directly to babies and repeat words for reinforcement. Older children are encouraged to use their thinking skills in activities. For example, children compare the size of their doll to the tower of bricks, which they have built and staff encourage them to conclude whether the tower is bigger or smaller than the doll. Staff extend learning by asking, 'How many more bricks do you think you need?' Visual aid cards and simple sign language are also used as effective methods of communication and is particularly successful with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or speak English as additional language. However, there is less opportunity for children who do speak English as an additional language to hear and see their home language during their play.

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

Children enjoy their time at the setting and have formed close bonds with staff, who demonstrate a kind and loving nature with all children. For example, a baby room member of staff gently strokes the cheeks of children who are taking time to settle to sleep, speaking to them in a soothing manner until they drift off. Babies enjoy the close interaction from staff as they play with them at their level. For example, they giggle when staff softly drape light material over their heads and when the bubbles blowing in the garden land on them. Staff ensure they are knowledgeable about new children's likes and dislikes when they start, ensuring resources are accessible that they know from children's families they enjoy. Children are able to settle at their own pace and receive good support to do so. Transitions within the setting are effective as clear information is exchanged from key person to key person as children move rooms and they gradually move based on their individual needs. There is a clear appreciation for the diverse backgrounds of the children who attend the setting. Also, close partnerships with parents have formed to support children's well-being. Clear systems are in place for sharing information when children attend other settings and good relationships have formed with teachers from the local schools.

Staff are deployed well both inside and outside, to provide continuous supervision of children, which contributes to their overall safety and welfare. They are mindful at all times of each other's whereabouts and work very closely as a team. Staff provide children with a safe environment in which to learn and encourage children to think about their own safety and take risks in their play. For example, they participate in weekly woodwork sessions and wear safety goggles to protect their eyes as they hammer and saw the wood. Children's independence skills are promoted well in routine activities. For example, during snack, children pour their own drinks and peel the skin from their banana. Children generally behave well and through gentle reminders learn to play co-operatively with their peers.

Children's awareness of developing a healthy lifestyle is encouraged through activities that promote healthy eating and through outdoor play opportunities. Children spend quality time in the fresh air each day, as the outdoor environment is accessible from all rooms. Children engage in a range of physical activities and are often taken to a nearby park to enhance their physical skills on the large apparatus. A variety of snacks provide a healthy and well-balanced diet. The majority of children bring in lunch from home and some children are provided with a two course meal cooked by a local school. Children plant and attend to vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots in the garden, to gain a better understanding of where food comes from. Children understand the importance of cleaning their hands before eating and help themselves to drink when thirsty, which encourages self-care skills prior to starting school.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are good, as there are secure partnerships with families and other agencies in place. Staff attend regular training and are clear about how to report their concerns. Recruitment procedures are thorough and help to ensure that children are cared for by a suitable staff team. Safeguarding is discussed at each staff meeting and staff are tested on their understanding, so that it remains at the forefront of their minds at all times. Effective channels of communication are in place with parents and staff are kept aware of children's individual needs and family backgrounds to ensure they are fully safeguarded. Staff endeavour to provide a safe and secure environment for children through robust risk assessments and regular health and safety audits. Effective policies and procedures, such as a complaints policy is in place and documentation is kept to a good standard.

The management team work well together to provide a quality childcare provision for all. Staff have developed a clear understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements and strive to provide all children with an effective and enjoyable learning experience. Staff are listened to, involved in evaluating the setting and supported well in their professional development. Their practice is regularly monitored through room observations both from the manager and each other. Staff engage in yearly appraisals and formal supervision meetings, which identifies training to further support their development. The setting's areas for improvement are regularly reviewed and revised as targets are implemented and new ones take priority. More sensory play opportunities in

the garden have been identified as a current area to develop, which will enhance children's experiences outside overtime. Positive steps have been taken to address the recommendations at the last inspection and demonstrates the manager's and staffs' commitment to continuous improvement.

Staff are experienced in working with other professionals, which provides a strong contribution to meeting the individual needs of children and their families who have been identified as requiring additional support. Positive relationships have formed with parents and they are warmly welcomed into the setting. They attend many events that support their children's pre-school life, such as a Mother's day tea and cake session and a sing a long at Christmas. Parents speak positively about the setting. They say their children, 'love attending, talk frequently about what they have been doing and love the ladies that care for them', which makes them feel happy.

### **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
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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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>	EY439880
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland
<b>Inspection number</b>	951139
<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>	36
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	76
<b>Name of provider</b>	The Ark Association
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13/06/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572770121

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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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