

Inspection of The Ark Nursery

St. Georges C of E Primary School, Kesteven Road, STAMFORD, Lincolnshire PE9 1SX

Inspection date: 10 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children love coming to the nursery. They arrive happy and excited to learn in the warm and homely environment created by staff. They develop very close relationships with staff, who greet them with a cuddle and a smile. Children's interests and happiness are at the centre of each decision made by staff. This supports children's well-being and ensures that they feel safe and secure. Children radiate confidence from a young age and are supported by staff to develop their curiosity. Babies enjoy developing their hand-to-eye coordination and understanding of how things move. They are supported by staff to discover what happens next as they post different-textured balls through cardboard tubes.

Children learn new describing words, such as 'smooth'. Children watch in awe as staff show them the shadow made by the balls as they roll them down a sloped canopy in the garden. The children giggle and clap as they try throwing the balls onto the canopy and watch the shadows to try to catch them at the bottom. They are motivated to be determined and remain focused through staff's consistent praise.

Children are eager to try things for themselves and behave extremely well. They listen to staff and acquire a range of skills through the familiar daily routines. Children put their outdoor clothing on independently and wait patiently in a line ready to walk down the stairs to the garden. While practising their physical skills in the garden, they remind each other how to climb trees and balance, explaining 'how to keep safe'. Children are supported by staff to develop good manners. They wait for their friends before enjoying a healthy meal together, saying 'thank you' in response to staff and others.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff know the children extremely well. They meet children's individual care needs with compassion, including children who need additional support or have complex medical needs.
- Staff observe children throughout the day. They accurately identify what they need to learn next and closely monitor their progress. Staff make decisions on how to best plan learning opportunities for their key children. Staff work together and share ideas on how best to support any potential gaps in each child's learning and development. Occasionally, when children lead their own play, staff do not support them to make use of all available space outside. This means that children of all ages can choose play in one area at the same time and some areas become too busy. Therefore, staff are unable to identify those children who need further support and some children spend time unoccupied.
- Staff engage children through their interests in nature and the outdoors. Young

children enjoy developing their creativity while painting with sunflowers and coloured dabbers. They place the flowers in green and yellow paint and repeat key words staff use, such as 'stomp' and 'dip'. Staff encourage children to swap dabbers and negotiate with their friends, which helps them learn to share and take turns. At times, some adult-led activities are not challenging enough for some children. Therefore, they only remain engaged for a short time and not all children make the most progress they are capable of.

- Staff are experienced practitioners. Their high-quality interactions help children to learn new vocabulary and develop their confidence in holding conversations. Pre-school children share their ideas while making 'potions'. Staff ask children thought-provoking questions. For example, they ask, 'What does your potion do?' Children pretend to feed staff a potion that makes them 'scared'. Staff suggest they need one to make them 'brave' as an opposing feeling. The children laugh hysterically as staff pretend to be affected by some of their unusual potions.
- Staff place great importance on teaching children vital life skills, such as caring about others, trying things for themselves and respecting the environment. Staff model good behaviour, including at mealtimes. Young children imitate staff. For example, they invite visitors to join them for dinner and encourage them to put on a bib. Staff encourage children to use cutlery independently and learn the skills to keep themselves clean and healthy. Staff teach children how to wipe their nose and wash their hands and then encourage them to place paper towels in the bin.
- Leaders promote a 'family' ethos in the staff team where they evaluate together what it is like for a child at the nursery. They meet regularly to plan and share information from training opportunities that have a positive impact on children's experiences. Staff explain how training recently led to staff adding resources into the environment to further develop children's artistic and creative skills.
- Parents and carers feel involved in all aspects of their child's experience and comment that their views are considered when developing the nursery. Staff thoroughly discuss children's learning needs with parents and suggest ideas for activities to try at home. Parents are complimentary about staff and the level of care and dedication children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and leaders check the environment constantly to ensure that it is a safe place for children to play. They assess each area and take all necessary steps to reduce any potential risks to children. Staff and leaders have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They demonstrate a good understanding of the signs and symptoms which might indicate that a child is at risk of harm. They are confident in reporting and escalating any concerns to the relevant people, including allegations against other adults working with children. Leaders follow a recruitment process and continuously monitor staff's ongoing suitability to work with children. Staff and leaders continuously update their

knowledge of safeguarding and any issues that may affect children's safety in the local community.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- make the most of all available space outside to be able to better support all children who need it
- provide more challenge for children during adult-led activities to fully extend all children's learning and help them make the progress they are capable of.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2502941
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10240071
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	109
Name of registered person	The Ark Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2502940
Telephone number	01780723141
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Nursery registered in 2018 and is based in Stamford. The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, 19 hold qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lora Teague

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk together. They discussed the learning intentions for children and how the environment is arranged.
- The manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity.
- The inspector observed staff and children of all ages throughout the nursery.
- The inspector held discussions with staff and leaders regularly during the inspection.
- Parents' and carers' views were taken account of by the inspector.
- A sample of documents was reviewed, including paediatric first-aid certificates, evidence of suitability checks, and safeguarding policies and procedures.

We carried out this inspection 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022