

Inspection of The Ark Nursery and Space Out of School Club

Dean Hey Farm, Cragg Vale, HEBDEN BRIDGE, West Yorkshire HX7 5RU

Inspection date: 24 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in the care of the highly qualified and dedicated staff team. Children are excited to catch up with their friends and staff when they arrive. Staff know the children exceptionally well. Children know that they are listened to, and staff take a genuine interest in what children are telling them. Resources such as family pictures are displayed in their rooms, developing good links from home. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

Children are motivated to explore the outdoor environment and learn about the world around them. Younger children learn the skills needed to keep safe in the 'woodland explorers' area. They learn about hibernation as they collect sticks and leaves to make a comfy bed for the hedgehogs over the winter. They use clay and sticks to create their own hedgehogs. Children describe 'long' and 'short' sticks as well as 'thick' and 'thin' ones, and they count how many they use as hedgehog spikes. They recall that bears also hibernate for the winter. Pre-school children take part in regular activities, including those linked to forest school. They learn to use tools safely, make and cook on a campfire and use the environment to make dens. This helps children develop a wonderful appreciation for the natural world around them.

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

- The curriculum is expertly developed to spark children's interests. Staff skilfully weave the learning intentions into all the children's activities and experiences. For example, as children make Christmas baubles, they practise their cutting skills using scissors. They sharpen their pencils safely. They select a pattern using a dice, which they copy onto their bauble. Children are making excellent progress in their learning and development, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children develop exceptional physical skills from an early age. For example, as babies climb and slide on the equipment, they develop the skills ready for walking. Older children take part in physical programmes designed to promote their health and prepare them for school. They take part in exciting activities, such as running to collect Santa's presents that keep falling out of his sack. Children laugh and have fun while making progress in their physical development.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, communication and language development has been a high priority. Experienced staff promote children's language using repetition and recall of words. For example, children learn three words a week as well as their meaning and when to use them in context. Older children create their own stories with the encouragement of staff, who record the children's words. Staff are inspirational in their modelling of language and take the time to

ensure children understand what they are saying. Children make substantial progress in their communication and language skills.

- Children develop excellent independence skills. They demonstrate this when they take off and put on their shoes and socks and then build up to putting on their shorts and t-shirts for activities. Children expertly use knives to cut up the vegetables to make soup. They serve their own food at mealtimes. Children make independent choices in what activities they would like to engage with.
- The nursery's special educational needs coordinator is very knowledgeable in her role. She works closely with each child's key person, family and agencies to ensure they receive timely interventions and targeted support to meet their development needs. Additional funding is used to enhance children's learning experiences, to ensure any possible gaps in learning are quickly closed.
- Management encourages staff to develop their skills and knowledge. Regular training and very effective reflection ensure that staff knowledge is current and forward thinking. Staff are supported by management through regular supervision sessions that focus heavily on their well-being.
- The partnership with parents is wonderful. They are invited into the nursery to see how and what children learn, particularly in the forest school. Parents take part in the campfire songs and drink hot chocolate. They are kept fully informed regarding their child's routines and developmental progress. Staff provide leaflets of support, including on potty training and biting. Parents are encouraged to take books from the baskets available to them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and well. They can recognise the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child could be at risk of harm. Staff know who to contact and the procedure to follow if they have a child protection concern. The nursery has comprehensive policies and procedures that meticulously support the excellent safeguarding practice. The nursery offers parents the reassurance that all staff are paediatric first-aid trained. Accident and incident forms are completed and reviewed to ensure any safety issues are addressed quickly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY492427
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10253008
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 11
Total number of places	205
Number of children on roll	421
Name of registered person	The Ark Experience Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP905555
Telephone number	01422 882010
Date of previous inspection	16 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Ark Nursery and Space Out of School Club registered in 2002 and is located in Hebden Bridge. There are 47 members of staff, of which 33 are childcare staff. 24 staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one who holds early years teacher status and five who hold level 6 qualifications. The nursery opens all year round, Monday to Friday, from 7am until 6.30pm, except for bank holidays, two training days and the week between Christmas and New Year. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. During term time, the out-of-school provision opens from 7am to 8.45am and from 3pm to 6.30pm. It opens from 7am to 6.30pm during the school holidays.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jo Clark

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to understand how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector made observations throughout the inspection of children's experiences in the setting and assessed the impact that they were having on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector about their experiences in the setting.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- A meeting was held with the manager. This included a review of relevant documentation, including staff suitability and training.

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.

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