

The Exwick Ark

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY365656
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Inspector	Anne Legge
Setting Address	Exwick Parish Hall, Station Road, Exwick, Exeter, Devon, EX4 2AA
Telephone number	07931 591735
E-mail	admin@exwickarkpreschool.com
Registered person	Mrs Harriet Sharp and Mrs Paula Stone
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Exwick Ark is a privately-owned group, which registered in 2005 and moved to its current premises at Exwick Village Hall in 2008. This is a temporary arrangement, while alternative accommodation is sought. The setting is open on weekdays in term-time, from 09:00 to 16:00. Children use the main hall and adjoining toilets. There are also small rooms, a kitchen and storage space, as well as an enclosed outside play area. For three short periods each week, the Church Room next door is used, as the village hall is occupied by other groups. Up to 32 children, aged from two to five years, may attend in the hall and up to 10 in the Church Room. There are currently 45 children on roll, 25 of whom are in receipt of nursery funding. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are welcomed and supported. There are six staff who work with the children, all of whom have appropriate child care or teaching qualifications; two staff have Early Years Professional Status.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children make excellent use of the outdoor space to access fresh air and physical exercise, throughout most of each session. They move freely between indoor and outdoor areas, enjoying physical play with wheeled toys, using balls or balancing on cones. They engage in role play outdoors, sometimes transporting their own resources, and they play with sand and water or care for plants. Children sometimes visit the nearby park, where they use large climbing equipment. Indoors, they use the ample space to play parachute games or practise their throwing skills with bean bags. The pre-school is committed to promoting healthy eating and works very successfully with parents, to ensure that children eat nutritious meals and snacks, throughout the day. Healthy lunch boxes are celebrated and photographs displayed, to encourage other parents, and staff regularly advise families about suitable foods. Children discuss healthy eating and know when their lunches are particularly nutritious. Snacks include fresh fruit and savoury snacks, which effectively promote good health. Children drink water or milk at snack and have constant access to fresh drinking water, ensuring that good fluid levels are maintained.

Children are very well protected from infection. The premises are cleaned daily and staff ensure that all surfaces remain clean during sessions. Tables are thoroughly disinfected before snacks and meals. Nappy changing procedures are very hygienic, as staff wear gloves and aprons, and the changing unit is disinfected after each use. Children learn very good hand washing routines, and seldom need adult prompting to wash their hands at appropriate times. They use liquid soap and paper towels, to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Children's care is good, when they are unwell or injured. Staff have current first aid qualifications and records of accidents and medication are comprehensive and shared appropriately with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

At most sessions, children enjoy the facilities of a spacious hall, where they can move freely and safely between areas and activities. For two half-days a week, they use rooms in the adjoining church building, where space is more limited, but sufficient for the numbers attending. Children's safety is given a very high priority in both settings and all areas have been thoroughly risk assessed. Security is assured, as doors are locked during sessions and an effective system, using bells and gates, ensures that children cannot leave without supervision and unauthorised adults cannot enter the premises. There are comprehensive systems for registering visitors and for ensuring that only authorised adults collect children.

The premises are shared and all resources are stored in a large cupboard. Staff make good use of displays and resources, to improve the environment for children and to give them easy access to a wide range of play materials. There are effective systems for regularly checking and cleaning toys, keeping them in very good condition for children's use. Rigorous risk assessments are carried out daily, weekly and termly, ensuring that all hazards are noted and addressed. Good use is made of heater guards, socket covers and door restrictors, to protect children from injury. Children leaving the hall to visit the toilets are carefully monitored. Outings, such as to the park or library, are carefully risk assessed and staff carry out safety checks on venues, before children access them. Children are safe in emergencies, as appropriate fire equipment is in place and checked regularly, and fire drills are planned to include all children, at least every term. Staff have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding issues and procedures. They have all

undertaken relevant training and are able to protect children from harm, working with other agencies when appropriate.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a very good variety of activities, which are carefully matched to their ages and abilities, and effectively promote their progress. Planning for children aged under three years includes all aspects of the Birth to three matters framework. Staff provide a very wide range of sensory experiences, such as exploring sand, water and dough, painting with fingers or using sparkly and coloured liquids. Heuristic play materials are used extensively with the youngest children and activities are planned to develop their sense of self and of belonging. Staff keep written and photographic records of children's development, clearly tracking their progress, and setting appropriate targets for the next steps. Young children are settled and busily engaged during sessions. They make good progress, due to their varied experiences and the skill of staff in very effectively challenging and supporting their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding aspects. Staff carefully assess children's learning and successfully identify the next steps in their development. They use this information very effectively to plan activities which challenge children appropriately and help them to make good progress. Assessment and planning systems are comprehensive, and assessment information is recorded in an attractive and clear format, which enables staff and parents to accurately track children's development. Staff are very skilful in their use of questions and discussion, encouraging children to think for themselves and to solve problems. Sessions include well-resourced free play opportunities and time spent in small 'family' groups, with key workers. Group work is carefully planned to meet the needs of different age-groups, and is generally very effective, although some small group activities for younger children are slightly less appropriate.

Children use writing for a variety of purposes, such as recording food orders in a role play café, with very good adult modelling. They draw, colour and make marks, and older children make excellent progress in writing their names during practical tasks, such as when recording their own game scores. Children hear and discuss letter sounds and able children are very effectively extended into developing early reading skills. There are many opportunities for children to solve problems, such as when choosing materials suitable for models or deciding how to make a table for role play. Staff constantly challenge children's thinking and encourage their efforts. Children count in daily routines and activities, such as when chopping bananas into slices for snack or shaking musical instruments. Able children are challenged to combine numbers or consider one more or less, such as when setting tables in role play.

Children engage in imaginative role play, which is very ably extended by staff. For example, they go on imaginary bus journeys and discuss the animals they may see on a safari. They develop their creativity in a wide range of art and craft activities, using their own ideas to draw, paint or make models. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and playing musical instruments. They learn about the natural world, as they explore 'mini beasts' in a topic or help to tend plants in the garden. Children develop their physical skills as they use pens, brushes and scissors with very good control or take part in regular trips to the park, where they climb, balance or swing on large equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the pre-school's exemplary systems for communicating with their carers. Parents receive excellent information about all aspects of their child's care and development. They share children's records and are invited to add their comments. Home visits are offered, when children first attend and staff work very closely with whole families. An active Parent Forum regularly reviews many aspects of the pre-school's provision and liaises with staff and parents, so that all comments and views are noted and taken into account. The pre-school's partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. There is an excellent commitment to ensuring that all parents regularly receive detailed information about their child's progress towards the early learning goals. Key family workers meet termly with parents, to share progress records and agree targets. Records are comprehensive, clear and very accessible to parents, with plenty of annotated photographs of children's achievements. If parents are unable to attend meetings, reports are issued about their child, so that they are fully informed and can support their child's future learning. Plans are displayed in the parent area and a whiteboard outlines daily activities. Newsletters and the prospectus also contain detailed information about the curriculum.

Children thrive at the pre-school, due to its ethos of inclusion and caring, based on clearly stated Christian values. They develop affectionate relationships with staff and benefit from the adults' positive, calm and consistent approach to managing their behaviour. Children follow the group's 'Golden Rules' and learn to share and respect each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to value differences, as they celebrate a variety of festivals, including Saints' days, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language receive excellent support and are very effectively helped to integrate into the group. Staff use signing and work hard to learn phrases and songs in the languages spoken by children attending. They work closely with other professionals, to fully support those with additional needs. Children's progress is carefully monitored and effectively promoted, through the setting of realistic targets and their successful implementation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by very well qualified and competent staff, who are committed to the constant improvement of the quality of care and nursery education provided. They work as a very effective team and all roles are clearly explained at the start of each session. A quality assurance scheme has been successfully completed and there are very good systems for regularly reviewing all policies and procedures. Children's care is securely underpinned by all the required documentation, which is comprehensive and very well organised. All aspects of health and safety are good and staff use the space and resources very effectively, to meet children's needs. Occasionally, the shared premises present problems for the group, such as in creating a warm, homely environment, which is attractive for children. However, the warm and caring emotional environment of the pre-school is a major factor in the good progress made by children attending.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff meet weekly to review activities and to ensure that the individual learning needs of children are met. They critically evaluate all aspects of the provision and develop termly action plans, to ensure constant progress. Staff appraisal systems are effective in identifying training needs. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the indoor physical environment, making it more comfortable and attractive for children and always maintaining an appropriate temperature.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure that small group activities are always appropriate for the age and stage of development of those taking part.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk