

Inspection of The Little Ark

The John Wesley Church of England Methodist Primary School, Wesley School
Road, ASHFORD, Kent TN23 5LW

Inspection date: 20 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children enter the pre-school confidently and excitedly. Staff have exceptional interactions with children as they arrive, which sets a highly positive tone for the day. Children enter the main playroom enthusiastically and behave impeccably throughout the day. They are enthralled by the wide range of highly stimulating experiences on offer, indoors and outdoors, all through the day. For instance, staff provide exceptional support for children to grow carrots and French beans, which they later sell to parents to raise money. Children are therefore actively challenged. They show a high sense of achievement because staff use the money raised from their sales to get more resources.

Children are exceptionally independent. Leaders regularly review the layout of the pre-school to make it as accessible as possible for all children. For instance, children are able to use a low-level tap to independently get water in fragile china cups. Children demonstrate exceptionally high persistence as they continue to 'transport' water successfully between the tap and tray. Staff expertly introduce various areas of learning into every activity children access. They seize the opportunity to build on children's fascination with their play to introduce new vocabulary, such as 'light' and 'heavy'. This activity also enhances the development of the children's confidence and resilience tremendously, and it further embeds the setting's curriculum intent of promoting independence in all children.

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

- Leaders are very skilful. They use available funding very efficiently to provide training that swiftly bridges any identified gaps in staff knowledge. This very successfully supports staff to develop and maintain the skillset they need to support children. Staff make excellent use of the knowledge they gain to raise outcomes for children. For example, recent training has supported staff to make an immediate and tremendous impact on children's behaviour. The highly skilled staff help children to make rapid and impressive progress.
- Staff develop a thorough understanding of what children know and can do. They expertly use this knowledge to precisely target planning to help all children quickly reach their full potential. For instance, staff incorporate opportunities for children to explore drawing and writing materials in all areas of the pre-school. With encouragement from staff, children make excellent use of these resources to practise making marks that have meaning. Children quickly develop a well-rounded understanding of the use of their writing skills.
- Staff expertly build on children's interest to extend their language by engaging them in lively and interesting conversations. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's learning. For instance, following a discussion with children about caring for birds, staff supported children to make a bird feeder. They

placed this in front of the nursery for all children to explore. Staff further extended children's learning by encouraging them to make binoculars from cardboard tubes. Staff later provided real binoculars that children use to watch the birds while they eat. Activities of this quality are routinely available, very successfully building on, and extending, children's interest. This enables children to engage deeply and significantly enhances their learning.

- Staff deliver their intended curriculum in an exceptional manner. The importance of communication is clearly visible and threaded through staff's interactions. For instance, during a highly enjoyable yoga exercise, staff used rich language, such as 'downward dog', 'easy pose' and 'easy breathing'. Children demonstrated a high level of focus and concentration. This activity is also very effective in promoting children's physical coordination.
- Staff expertly support children to manage their personal needs. Children make tremendous effort to keep trying until they achieve what they set out to do. For instance, staff provide the children with a 'face wiping station'. Children use this to independently wipe their noses while checking themselves in a mirror. This high level of independence builds children's confidence and resilience tremendously. It also has a highly positive impact on children's emotional well-being.
- The arrangements to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are exceptional. Staff use their expert knowledge to support children with SEND to recognise their feelings and take swift actions. Staff provide highly effective spaces that children can independently access to help them calm down when needed. For instance, they independently go to sit on a chair or in a tent and pick up books to read. This significantly enhances children's ability to manage their feelings and behaviour independently.
- Key persons are highly skilled at forming relationships with children. This enhances secure and trusting relationships between all children and staff. For instance, children are confident to find staff to share their deep love for reading. They confidently retell stories without any prompting. This very successfully supports children's literacy skills.
- Staff demonstrate exceptionally high partnership with parents. For instance, staff regularly liaise with parents to share highly effective and successful strategies for supporting children's behaviour. This results in substantial and sustained positive changes in children. It also significantly enhances a long, rich and trusting relationship between the pre-school and parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have good knowledge of safeguarding policies and how to implement these. Staff know where to find relevant information they need to keep children safe. They have a confident knowledge of the process to refer any child protection concerns. Staff are aware of the signs that may indicate that a child is at risk, including the risks associated with exposure to extreme views and beliefs. They also show a thorough understanding of the whistle-blowing policy and when

to use it. Children show understanding of how to keep themselves safe, which reflects what leaders and staff have taught them.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY391487
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10276412
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	27
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	The Little Ark Preschool
Registered person unique reference number	RP905741
Telephone number	01233 614 660
Date of previous inspection	14 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

The Little Ark registered in 2009. It is located in John Wesley Church of England Methodist Primary School in Ashford, Kent. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 8.45am until 2.45pm, during term time only. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs 10 members of staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Toyin Aina

Inspection activities

- This is 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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.

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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