

Inspection of Ark Start, Oval

Ark Oval Primary Academy, 98 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon CR0 6BA

Inspection date: 21 March 2023

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

The nursery offers children rich opportunities to play and learn. Imaginative activities are available at different heights to inspire curiosity. For example, a plastic tray on the floor with soil and buried props motivates children to explore. Children make and taste imaginary juice from carrots they have found and discuss how many are needed to make a cupful. Staff build on vocabulary by providing a narrative for the experience.

Staff know children well; this helps them to feel safe and settled. The nursery focuses on personal, social and emotional development, giving children the tools to progress through life and education. Behaviour is positive and managed sensitively by teaching children empathy and names for feelings. Respect and tolerance are woven into the fabric of the nursery. Positive efforts are made to communicate intentions to parents. The outside space is thoughtfully resourced, with loose parts and open-ended play materials. This encourages imagination as well as physical development. Children work together to construct a pirate ship. They use tubes to spy on each other and a sand timer to alert them when it is time to swim with sharks.

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

- Staff develop children's communication well. They create a feeling of inclusivity by using a variety of methods to interact with children. Non-verbal children and children with limited language are included with the use of sign language. Staff make eye contact and use body language and tone of voice to communicate. Language is modelled by describing what the children are doing as it is happening.
- Key workers help children progress by concentrating on specific learning needs. Resources are thoughtful and age appropriate. However, not all activities follow children's interests. An emphasis on an adult-led activities means opportunities for discovery and creative thinking are limited.
- The nursery promotes school readiness by encouraging the children to be independent. Children are self-sufficient and learn to take care of their own needs. For example, they dress independently.
- Staff pay special attention to teachable moments. For example, getting children to think about how they are feeling, and those around them. Children listen to familiar stories and are invited to participate by remembering what comes next. Staff offer praise and encouragement to children by consistently noticing and narrating their actions. For example, keeping the pencils safe when walking. However, high levels of adult involvement reduces the time children have to think and respond.
- Routines are embedded giving children a sense of security and expectation of

what is happening next. Staff model positive behaviour and respect for one another. Children are helped to take turns and show empathy to others, and, as a result, behaviour is good and children grow in confidence. When dealing with big emotions, children are comforted and shown consideration. This allows time for them to self-regulate.

- The nursery works hard to promote positive relationships. Stay-and-play sessions for parents are offered throughout the year, each covering different areas of learning. This helps to support and extend learning at home. Staff regularly share information, such as activities the children have enjoyed using an online application. Meetings and parents' evenings are used to communicate developmental progress. In addition, the nursery works closely with outside agencies, such as the local authority, to support children.
- The managers offer consistent support by leading from the front and being present in the rooms with the children. Weekly meetings and updates mean that staff feel involved. Supervisions and targets are implemented to help manage performance and improve practice. Staff are committed to providing good quality childcare.
- Children learn to be safe by managing their own risk and being body aware. For example, staff make children mindful of potential hazards, such as standing at the top of the climbing frame, while allowing them the freedom to climb.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff confidently describe safeguarding procedures and know what to do should there be a concern. Weekly staff meetings allow time to reflect and strengthen knowledge. The manager has good safeguarding knowledge, sustained through links with the wider community, including the adjoining school. The nursery is secure and clean. Staff use swipe cards to gain access in and out of rooms. Risk assessments for nursery and trips out are comprehensive. Children learn about hygiene through positive role modelling and being encouraged to practice self-care, for example, children are reminded to wipe noses and encouraged to look in the mirror while doing so. Medication and allergy procedures are robust.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- give children time and space to allow them to think and process their thoughts and ideas
- review the planning and implementation of adult-led activities to ensure that they capture children's interests and build on their existing knowledge.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2629258
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10280958
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	39
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	Ark UK Programmes
Registered person unique reference number	2601915
Telephone number	02031166338
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Ark Start, Oval registered in 2021. It is based in the grounds of Ark Academy in Croydon, in the London Borough of Croydon. It is open all year round, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm. The setting employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold an appropriate early years qualification from level 3 to level 6. The provider is in receipt of funding to offer free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Zoe Duggan

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 staff 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 each room.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector played alongside the children and sought their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on the children's learning.
- The manager and staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of story time in the pre-school room with the manager.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and shared their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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