

Inspection of Little Ark Nursery & Pre-School

Little Ark Nursery, The Hope Centre, Bernard Road, Sheffield S2 5BQ

Inspection date: 25 April 2025

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

This is a welcoming and inclusive setting, where children feel happy and safe to explore. Staff provide a very happy, safe and secure environment for children. The curriculum is sequenced and, overall, provides children with the skills they need before moving on to school. Staff positively welcome children on arrival. Staff plan a range of activities that captivate children's interests and promote their development. Most children enter the setting happily at the start of the day. Those children who require additional support to settle, such as young children in the baby room, receive lots of cuddles and reassurance. Staff greet parents and children warmly. Children greet each other and settle quickly. They choose the resources, activities and staff they wish to play with.

Staff know children well and build positive relationships with them and their parents and carers from before children start. For example, during settling-in visits, staff gain key information about what children know and can do. They ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make the best possible progress. Staff work in partnership with other professionals to ensure that children receive the specialist support and equipment they need. They make timely referrals so children who need them have education, health and care plans in place to fully prepare for the next stage in their education. The manager and staff are reflective and have developed a sensory room, which is used for interventions catered to meet children's individual needs.

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

- Staff help children to develop a love of books. They have developed a lending library so that children can take books home to read with parents. Children choose to look at books independently throughout the day and staff read to children. This helps to promote children's early literacy skills.
- The setting provides staff with a range of training and support. This has impacted positively on staff's practice throughout the nursery. However, leaders do not use the knowledge gained from the monitoring of practice to target where staff need further support and guidance. This results in minor inconsistencies in the implementation of the setting's curriculum.
- Staff support children who speak English as an additional language. They speak to parents to learn key words, phrases and songs in children's home languages. Parents also share their cultural traditions, and staff incorporate these within their planning.
- Children have effective communication skills. They express themselves clearly and confidently. Staff ask appropriate questions, comment on children's play and model the pronunciation of difficult words. However, staff sometimes do not introduce new vocabulary to extend children's speech and language

development further.

- Children's behaviour is good. They understand the rules and boundaries in the setting. For example, staff explain why children must walk inside and share toys and resources with their friends. Staff are positive role models and encourage children to have tolerance and respect for each other.
- All staff know their key children well. They speak confidently about the progress children have made and how they monitor the progress children are making to ensure they plan for their next steps. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Staff teach children about healthy lifestyles. Children enjoy freshly made snacks and meals prepared by the cook on site. Staff talk with children about the benefits of trying new foods, such as cucumber and peppers. They promote children's oral health with parents. For example, staff provide children with a teeth cleaning pack to take home.
- Parents are very happy with the setting. They comment on the consistent support they have received from staff while settling children in. Parents also speak highly of the progress their children make, particularly with their independence. Parents feel supported and staff have built very good relationships with them. They have confidence in their child's safety at the setting.
- Children access outdoor play regularly and benefit from time spent outside. They explore the inviting outdoor play space with confidence and independence. Children develop physical agility as they run and balance. They use wheeled toy vehicles competently. Children investigate the natural environment and grow flowers from seeds. They delight in waving to the trains that pass by the setting's roof garden.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- target existing support for staff to help specifically build on their individual skills and knowledge of how to implement the intended curriculum more consistently
- ensure that staff take all opportunities to introduce new vocabulary to fully extend children's language and communication skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2716252
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10392192
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	57
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Hope Community Foundation
Registered person unique reference number	2716251
Telephone number	01142132050
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Ark Nursery & Pre-School re-registered in 2023, and prior to this had been registered since 2003. It is situated in Sheffield, close to the city centre. The setting employs 11 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. It opens from Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The setting provides government funded childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachael Barrett

Inspection activities

- The manager and deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Staff 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 on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.

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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