

Inspection of Ark Les Enfants Nursery and Forest School

Les Enfants Ltd, Lower Woodbank House, Avondale Road, DARWEN, Lancashire BB3 1JE

Inspection date: 18 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff create a very warm and friendly atmosphere for children. This, alongside secure settle-in arrangements, helps children and their parents form close bonds with key staff. All children, including those who are very new to the setting, are settled and happy. Parents are very complimentary about the level of service they receive and highly rate the quality of care and education provided for their children.

Leaders have constructed a balanced and sequenced curriculum. This takes good account of what they know about children's current learning and skills. It is also designed to help children acquire new learning and be well prepared for future learning and school. Furthermore, the curriculum focuses on helping children encounter wider experiences that complement their learning and support their wider understanding. For example, children enjoy visits from the local dentist. This helps to allay children's fears of visiting the dentist. It also helps them understand the importance of implementing good dental hygiene routines.

Staff are excellent role models. Their cheery nature and keenness to help and support children shines through. For example, they shower children with praise and encouragement and are always on hand to give a reassuring cuddle when needed. As a result, children are kind and thoughtful and are willing to have a go and do things for themselves. For example, toddlers attempt to take off their waterproofs after playing outdoors. Older children confidently manage their own personal hygiene needs and offer help to their peers.

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

- The provider and senior leadership team work collaboratively with the staff. Overall, they implement a good programme of coaching, mentoring and support. As a result, staff report that they feel very happy in their work. However, leaders do not yet monitor staff practice closely enough. This means the intended curriculum is not consistently implemented to high levels across the nursery.
- Staff provide lots of opportunities for children to develop their large and small physical skills. For example, babies explore the texture of damp sand with their hands. Toddlers take part in a music and movements session where they copy the actions of staff. Pre-school children relish the opportunity to play in the snow. They excitedly slide down a slope with the staff and make marks in the ice with their fingers and sticks.
- In the main, interactions between staff and the children are positive. Staff are aware of the skills they want children to learn. However, at times, some staff fail to meaningfully engage all children and provide further challenges. As a result, some children disengage or wander off and their learning is not fully extended.
- Staff weave mathematical concepts through children's play. For example, babies

are encouraged to count balls as they roll them across the floor. Older children count out the correct number of pom poms and place them on a corresponding number mat. During a discussion about socks, staff introduce children to mathematical language, such as 'matching', and explain how two socks make a 'pair'. This supports children's understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Staff competently support children's developing communication and language. Staff model single words to babies and point to pictures in books to aid their understanding. Staff working with older children make good use of open questions as they play and interact with children. This supports children to use extended sentences and develop their confidence in speaking.
- Children behave well and understand what is expected of them. For example, older children show maturity as they line up to leave a room. Additionally, staff encourage all children to share, wait their turn and have respect for others' feelings.
- The dedicated cook ensures that all meals and snacks are healthy and nutritious and meet children's individual dietary requirements. Staff encourage children to serve their own food and pour their own drinks. This supports children's growing independence skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff support children to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, during a forest school session outdoors, children discuss the safety rules and behaviour expectations with the staff. The setting is safe and secure. Recruitment and vetting arrangements are robust. Most staff hold a paediatric first-aid certificate. This further assures children's safety. Staff receive safeguarding and child protection training. As such, they understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to strengthen their educational practice so that all aspects of the curriculum are delivered to consistently high levels
- provide closer monitoring of staff's practice, particularly following training, to ensure that all staff have understood key messages that further improve their practice.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY343942
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10324827
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 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	80
Name of registered person	Les Enfants Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP518320
Telephone number	01254 760473
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2018

Information about this early years setting

Les Enfants registered in 2006. The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 to 6, including one staff member with qualified teacher status. Three members of staff are unqualified. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 5.45pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Donna Birch

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a forest school session outdoors with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to the staff and the children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to the nominated individual, the senior leadership team and the manager about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to parents and read written parental feedback provided for the inspection.

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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