



Noahs Ark Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY220790
Inspection date	05 October 2006
Inspector	Sally Ann Hubbard
Setting Address	Robertson Barracks, Swanton Morley, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4TX
Telephone number	01362 627975
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Registered person	Noah's Ark Pre School
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children attending the pre-school. It opened in 1995 and registered to provide full day care in 2002. It operates from four rooms in the Community Centre at Robertson Barracks Swanton Morley. It is situated near to the village of Swanton Morley which is near to the town of Dereham in Norfolk. A maximum of 54 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 until 14.45 with sessions from 09.00 until 11.45 and 12.00 until 14.45.

There are currently 44 children from 18 months to four years on roll. Of these 22 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school serves both the military and the local civilian community. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language although there are none attending at present.

The pre-school employs six staff who are all appropriately qualified and experienced. The setting receives support from Children's services early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to have good personal hygiene routines to keep themselves healthy, for example, staff remind them to wash their hands before they come to have their snack and children always wash their hands after toileting. Pictures showing clear steps they need to follow with personal care when toileting are in place to show children what they should do. Despite good general hygiene and nappy changing procedures children are not fully protected from risk of cross infection after washing their hands. Most of them use the same towel to dry their hands on and there is no soap available at the sink in the playroom.

Children are protected from risk of illness as there are clear procedures which are implemented to ensure they do not attend when they are sick. Parents are given information about communicable diseases and what infections would exclude children from attending. Children's medical needs are well met because staff have permission to seek emergency medical advice and are trained in first aid. They keep clear accident records which they share with parents. Secure medicine administration procedures ensure children are protected from any risk as written permission is obtained and two staff are always present when medicines are given.

Children enjoy a healthy snack of fresh fruit and raw vegetables, they have banana, grapes, tomatoes, carrot to choose from with milk or squash to drink. They choose when they come and have their snack and drink as the snack bar is available for part of the morning. Children either bring in packed lunches which parents are encouraged to make healthy, or they can have a hot lunch. Menus are made available for parents and include healthy options. Children ask for a drink of water if they want one during the session.

Children enjoy being physically active throughout the day and use a variety of different equipment to help them develop a range of physical skills. Children enjoy manipulating, then rolling out dough to make shapes and letters during one activity and making pasta collages in another. Outside they have climbing equipment suitable for different ages and abilities, balls which they can throw up into the basketball nets which are at different heights, children show delight when they get the ball into the net. They very much enjoy using the scooters, ride on and pedal toys. Children use these confidently and can skilfully manoeuvre around the play area. Inside they develop physical skills appropriately by using a range of equipment, such as roller and cutters with dough, paint brushes and puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are personally welcomed into the setting; staff greet them by name and have a good rapport with them. The room is attractive and welcoming to children and is decorated with some examples of the children's work. Useful information is displayed for parents on the door

as they come in and in the entrance area, such as communicable diseases poster and funding information. Children arrive to a partly prepared room as staff set out some activities for them. Children freely access equipment and resources as they are stored in low level storage units. They are well labelled enabling children to identify what they contain. Children play with appropriate equipment and staff make sure this is safe and suitable by checking it conforms to safety standards. Although sufficient equipment is available this is not used to provide children with a range of stimulating activities throughout the day. As a result children's behaviour gradually gets worse throughout the morning.

Children are safe as the premises is kept secure, daily check lists and risk assessments ensure all areas are checked for safety before children arrive. Children are not able to leave the premises unaccompanied because once they have all arrived the main entrance door is locked. Safety measures are in place, for example a high handle on the kitchen door and covers in unused sockets. Children and staff learn how to get out of the building safely as they have regular practices of the fire drill. The fire drill procedure is displayed around the building and fire fighting equipment is available which is regularly serviced and maintained. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they are taught about the dangers of talking to strangers and road safety.

Children are further protected because staff aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. They have a clear policy in place and know the procedures to follow if they have concerns. The referral information and contact number is readily available. Staff are clear that they would follow up concerns and put the welfare of the children first.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are all confident, happy and well settled. They come in and immediately go to the available activities. They relate well to the staff and have good relationships with them. Staff are caring; they take time to find out about children's home circumstances and are sensitive to their individual needs, for example, if either parent is away on duty or children have specific needs. The children under two have a range of different activities prepared for them before they arrive and the room is bright attractive and welcoming. They are well supported by staff who encourage them to take part in a range of different play activities. Children especially enjoy listening to a story and they are encouraged to be involved in the story. Staff are aware of 'Birth to three matters' and are beginning to use this to help the younger children make progress.

The children over three have limited activities laid out and although they can select any of the resources from the low level storage they choose to play with what is available instead. However they quickly get fed up and mistreat the equipment. At times staff get well involved in children's play and help them to develop and extend their play situations, for example, children are well supported as they pretend to be doctors and patients. They enjoy taking part in this role play and spend a long time involved in this activity. However at other times staff are taken away to answer the phone or to undertake preparation work and not fully involved with supporting the children's play and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. However they are not always using this to effectively implement activities. Staff are all involved in planning and meet together regularly to complete the plans. The planning clearly shows how they will cover all areas of learning and are displayed so that staff can refer to them. Although at times staff get involved with and generally support the children as they play a lot of learning opportunities are missed. For example, at snack time there is no discussion about the children's healthy snack. There is also a lack of discussions, for example, with the dough to encourage children to use appropriate language to describe what it feels like and what they are doing.

At times children are fully involved in activities and well occupied. However staff do not always provide good role models for children's behaviour. As a result children's behaviour is not always appropriate. The rooms have sufficient space to have different areas for activities, such as a creative play area and quiet room. Some activities are well prepared for the children and staff enjoy getting involved in these, however, when the children arrive there are limited activities set out ready for them and children are not fully encouraged to choose alternative equipment to play with.

Assessments of children's progress are in place and staff record observations in children's records. They use these to identify what learning has taken place and to identify the next steps. However these steps are not used to inform the planning to help children make progress and move on.

Children's learning is generally effective. They are very confident and well settled; they come rushing in with enthusiasm and start playing with available toys. They have good relationships with staff and those needing settling are comforted and reassured. Children take turns and mostly share equipment, for example, with the play dough. They are developing their independence appropriately as they help to change their own shoes, go to the toilet by themselves and wash their hands.

Children enjoy having mark making available throughout the day and in the role play area. They recognise their own names as these are displayed on their coat pegs and also when they self register on arrival. Children enjoy listening to stories and are confident to talk about their experiences. Children have some opportunities to count and relate numbers to objects, for example, at snack time, during water play and at group time. However there are no discussions about shapes, little use of mathematical language in play and opportunities for children to solve problems are not utilised.

Children learn about their surroundings and the local area. They learn about their own beliefs and are confident to talk about their recent visit to the local church. Children also learn about the beliefs of others as they look at some of the different festival celebrated. Children have some opportunities to learn about and use technology, such as using telephones in role play and a computer keyboard. They enjoy regular opportunities to be creative as painting, dough play and water or sand is available daily. They especially enjoy becoming involved in role play situations with adults.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children all play freely with any of the equipment and resources. They are all included and able to be involved in the activities, staff know the children well and help them to feel comfortable and at home. Staff positively promote children's learning about the wider world and the beliefs of others as they look at some of the festivals they celebrate. An appropriate policy is in place for equal opportunities which is effectively implemented. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered. Staff are aware that some children may have special needs and have processes in place to identify and support them. They work closely with parents and any others to support both the child and parents.

Children have some understanding of how to behave appropriately and at times they share equipment and respond positively to staff. However their behaviour quickly deteriorates throughout the morning. They are very noisy, run around the room and toys are not treated with respect, some are thrown on the floor. The behaviour management policy is positive and staff sometimes use appropriate explanations to help children understand how to behave appropriately. However they do not always set a good example as they frequently shout across the room to gain children's attention or correct their behaviour.

Children benefit because staff are developing sound relationships with parents. They ensure they have sufficient information about children to enable them to meet their individual needs. There are appropriate systems in place for parents to make any concerns known and the contact number for Ofsted is displayed. They are welcome to become involved in the running the pre-school by serving on the committee.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive good information about the pre-school the welcome pack contains details of 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage as well as information about how the pre-school is run. Parents are welcomed into the group and are aware that they can come into the pre-school at any time to look at child records or to help out with sessions. They have opportunities to exchange information every day as staff are available to talk to them when they arrive to bring or collect their children. Each child has an individual care plan in place which is discussed and reviewed regularly with parents.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning as information is displayed telling them what the children are doing, such as the letter of the week. They contribute to the themes and topics by giving children items to bring in. Parents say that their children are happy at the pre-school and they can make comments and suggestions if they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's health and wellbeing is generally promoted. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities; however they are not always effectively deployed to enable them to be fully involved with the children. Space although sufficient is not always well organised and prepared. The key worker system is effective and staff maintain children's records and care plans and

communicate with parents regularly. Sufficient staff hold appropriate qualifications and they all have relevant experience in caring for children.

Children are protected because checks are in place for most staff and some are in the process of being completed. Children are not left alone with adults who have not been checked. Thorough employment procedures are implemented. These enable the pre-school to determine that candidates are suitable to work with children. Appropriate records are in place for all children and an accurate register of attendance is maintained. Staff show good awareness and understanding of what records are needed and are aware of changes and events that they need to notify Ofsted about.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The pre-school has a clear management structure and staff have good relationships with each other; they are very supportive and work well together. Most weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. However there is no system in place for monitoring the provision for nursery education on a regular basis. The manager only briefly observes what is going on in the pre-school as she passes through or when she is working directly with the children, this is not sufficient. No self evaluation has been completed therefore the group are not monitoring their provision through this.

There is an appropriate system in place for regular staff appraisals. The manager has a vision of how the group is going to develop and make progress, she and the staff team have very positive attitudes. Staff access appropriate training to help them develop their knowledge and skills. They are committed to making changes to improve the quality of care and education they provide. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school were asked to make changes to several of their policies including child protection and the complaints procedures. These have all been updated to include the required information and parents are now aware of the complaints procedures. They were asked to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Staff provide children with a range of appropriate resources to help support their learning in this area.

They were asked to ensure that the layout of the rooms provide separate areas for different activities and that the children are grouped appropriately so that they can all take an active part in the activity being held. Two rooms are available for the session and this provides different areas for play. Children can move freely around and take part in the activities when they want to, activities are available for a period of time to ensure all children have a chance to take part.

They were asked to ensure the outdoor play area is free from hazards. The outdoor play area is now safe for children to use. They were also asked to obtain further information regarding children's specific needs, their likes and dislikes at admission. The pre-school asks for full details about children to ensure they can meet their individual needs and they record this information for each child.

In addition they were asked to ensure the staff use positive language when encouraging the children to follow instructions. Staff generally use positive language when they ask the children to help or give them instructions. Lastly they were asked to provide a suitable range of activities which are stimulating and challenging for the older children and ensure the staff remain interested in what the children say and do. Staff are not always fully involved with the children throughout the sessions, therefore this remains an issue at this inspection and a recommendation is being given.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school were asked to develop the planning of the educational programme further to ensure each area of learning is regularly covered and sufficiently linked to the stepping stones. The planning has been sufficiently developed to show how all areas are covered and includes links to the stepping stones.

They were asked to give children more opportunities to learn initial sounds, to encourage children to sing number rhymes on a regular basis to promote counting skills and to ensure children have more regular opportunities to recognise and recreate simple patterns. All these areas are included in the planning; children have regular access to mark making activities and can recognise their names. They have regular group times at each session during which they sing number rhymes and opportunities to count are incorporated into everyday activities. Specific activities are planned for that help children to re-create and recognise simple patterns.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure effective practices are in place and implemented that positively promote children's good health

- ensure that an environment is created that encourages good behaviour and that adult handling of behaviour is consistent
- ensure staff are appropriately deployed to enable them to work directly with the children and that space and resources are effectively organised.

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):

- ensure staff use their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to sufficiently challenge children and help them make progress
- develop the use of children's assessments to ensure their next steps are used to help them make progress towards the early learning goals
- ensure that the provision for nursery education is effectively monitored and evaluated.

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