



Noahs Ark Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251580
Inspection date	07 September 2006
Inspector	Mary Gilbert
Setting Address	St Johns Church Hall, Caudwell Hall Road (North East), Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 4QE
Telephone number	01473 721252
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Registered person	Noah's Ark Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark Pre-school opened in 1985. It operates from two purpose-built rooms in the modern church hall of St John's Church, in north-east Ipswich. A maximum of 36 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday mornings from 09:15 to 11:45 during term-time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mostly come from the local catchment area. The pre-school supports some children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs ten staff. Six of the staff, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a recognised early year's qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted as the pre-school takes positive steps to maintain a healthy environment. Children are encouraged to begin to take responsibility for meeting their own health needs. For example, they learn it is important to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They are encouraged to realise the importance of wearing sun hats when playing outside on a hot sunny day. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. The playrooms are kept clean, spills are cleared up and tables cleaned before children sit down to eat.

Information is collected from parents with regard to children's medical needs. Parents provide written information for the administration of medication and records are kept of medication given. All accident records are signed by parents. Should a child become unwell whilst in the care of the pre-school there are clear procedures in place to inform parents or to seek emergency medical treatment or advice.

Children enjoy varied opportunities for physical activity both inside and out which enables them to develop their physical skills on a daily basis. Children use the well planned outdoor area extensively when the weather is good, but less frequently in colder weather.

Children are adequately nourished and have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating. Children have access to water throughout the session as they have their own labelled bottles easily accessible. Snack time provides children with opportunities to try a variety of healthy foods. They are provided with choice, and parents are informed of the foods offered. Children are encouraged to develop their social skills at snack time as they sit together to eat and help with serving the food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and effectively well cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. The playrooms are well organised to accommodate children in a child friendly environment. Areas in each room have been thoughtfully organised to provide for a range of different activities. For example, in the room used by the older children there is a well organised quiet area where books are well displayed. Children are able to access all areas safely. Posters and children's work are well displayed around the rooms which develops a child-friendly atmosphere where children's achievements are valued.

Children use a variety of equipment that is suitable and safe. The pre-school provides furniture, toys and resources which are appropriate for their purpose. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

Children's safety is well promoted through the pre-school because staff take positive steps to minimise risks. Children learn how to keep themselves safe when using a variety of equipment, for example, graters and knives. Regular risk assessments take place and appropriate action taken when a problem is identified.

Children are safeguarded because staff have an understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into place should there be a problem.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are confident, happy and developing their self-esteem. New children are given effective support when they start which enables them to gain in confidence and enjoy the activities provided at the pre-school. Planned activities for all children are well-balanced providing for all areas of development and providing some opportunities for children to initiate their own learning. Children's independence is encouraged in the daily routine. For example, some resources are available for children to self-select. Children's achievements are acknowledged through staff using praise and encouragement consistently.

Younger children enjoy the activities provided and attempts are made to link the planning for these children to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, this is new and hasn't yet been fully implemented to ensure all activities are suitable. Some observations of their learning takes place, but these are not yet linked to planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and work as a team and contribute their ideas to planning. Planning covers all areas of learning, but does not effectively show how each aspect is met. Evaluation of planning is beginning to take place, but as yet is not linked to assessment opportunities.

Children are motivated to learn through access to a wide range of stimulating activities provided each session. There is a good balance between individual, small group and whole group activities. Staff interact effectively with children and optimise learning from incidental opportunities. For example, children playing with a large box brought in with resources extended their play to paint and use in role play.

Children are gaining their competencies well across all aspects of communication, language and literacy. Children are confident to speak in large group situation, for example, in talking about the weather. Children have access to a range of books and can extend their mark making opportunities using a variety of materials. Children begin to recognise their own names when written, for example at snack time.

Children see and use number in everyday situations. For example, they count the number of children present. Specific activities are planned to enable children to order number. For example, in making a living number line. Children learn about shapes, colours and measures through experiences.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world through first hand experiences. For example, they explore materials through using sand, water, corn flour and shaving foam. They plant seeds and watch them grow. Children gain some understanding of information technology through access to a selection of resources, for example, calculators, keyboards and programmable toys. Children are beginning to develop their understanding of the wider community by welcoming visitors into the setting.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities, both inside and out, which help them to develop their confidence and skills when using small and large apparatus. Children have access to a wide range of small and large tools and equipment. For example, they use a selection of rollers and cutters when accessing the daily malleable activity.

Children develop their creativity and express their imagination through well-planned role play. They have access to a variety of media and materials and use to make a variety of pictures and models. Children sing simple songs from memory. They have access to musical instruments which enable them to explore different sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and other children in a setting which works with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs and fully involve them in the life of the setting. Children come in to the pre-school eagerly and settle well to the provided range of activities. The equal opportunities policy is inclusive and monitored to ensure all children are included and valued. Children learn to respect each other and to share their toys and resources. Some resources are provided to promote positive images of diversity, but these do not include many which promote positive images of disabilities. Some planned activities encourage children to learn about the lives and cultures of different members of the group.

Children's specific needs are met because staff understand and can implement the code of practice. The special needs co-ordinators work with parents and other professionals to monitor and assess children and provide for their needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately. They are developing confidence and self-esteem, behave appropriately and are developing an understanding of what is right and wrong. Children relate well to each other and to staff, and developing an understanding of their community through visitors to the setting. Children are beginning to show an appreciation of other cultures and beliefs through topics and activities offered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the pre-school ensures that children are well cared for in a setting where there are well qualified and suitable staff to meet the needs of the children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and contribute to the appointment of suitable staff. However, there is currently no induction procedure in place to ensure new staff and students are made aware of the policies and procedures of the setting. Maintaining a high ratio of adults to children is a priority and ensures children have sufficient support in the work and play. Staff deployment is clear and staff work together as a team to meet the needs of the children.

All records are readily available and well kept to maintain confidentiality. The policies and procedures of the pre-school have all been recently reviewed, are up to date and meet requirements.

The leadership and management is good. The manager has an understanding of providing good quality nursery education and has worked with the committee to ensure this is continually monitored. Staff have regular appraisals and their training needs are identified. The needs of the setting are also identified and a log of training needs developed. Ongoing evaluation of the provision identifies areas for further development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous integrated inspection the pre-school were required to complete a number of actions to improve the education offered and some recommendations to improve the quality of care. The setting has worked hard to implement these and have made considerable improvement.

The actions addressed to improve the educational provision included raising staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, developing planning and assessment procedures, including parents in children's learning and developing methods to monitor and evaluate the provision of education. All staff have been involved in a wide range of training to ensure they have a greater understanding of the Foundation Stage. This knowledge is now beginning to be reflected in planning and observations of children's learning. Parents have been made more aware of children's learning through written and verbal information. The committee and supervisor have developed a clear structure whereby the educational provision is monitored.

The recommendations addressed related to care were to review the organisation of the setting, to review the content and availability of resources, to ensure resources promote diversity, to ensure staff ensure policies and procedures are carried out effectively and to develop staff knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Daily organisation changes have ensured staff support children effectively. Resources have been reviewed and reorganised to enable children to self-select. Some resources have been purchased to promote diversity, but this is ongoing. Although staff have booked to attend courses related to 'Birth

to three matters' framework, they have been unable to access this as yet. Staff have begun to reflect on the framework, and this work is ongoing.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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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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):

- further develop the use of the outdoor area to ensure it can be used for all areas of development throughout the year
- further improve the outcomes for the younger children by planning activities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- review resources and extend to ensure they cover all aspects of diversity
- develop an effective induction system to ensure all new staff and students are aware of the policies and procedures of the setting.

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):

- further develop planning procedures to ensure they cover each aspect in all areas of learning
- develop evaluation and assessment opportunities to ensure they are linked to planning for next steps of children's learning.

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