



Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115281
Inspection date	06 July 2006
Inspector	Carol Cox
Setting Address	Corpus Christi Old Hall, Ellenborough Park South, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS23 1XW
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Registered person	Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup
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 was first registered in 1993, it is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and serves the local community. It operates from two large playrooms in the Corpus Christi Church Hall in Weston Super Mare, North Somerset. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:30 to 15:00 each weekday, during term time. Children may stay for the lunch club from 11:45 to 12:15. Children have access

to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 36 children, aged from three to under five years, on roll. Of these, 36 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff who work with children. All staff have relevant early years qualifications and some are working towards higher qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive in a healthy environment, where they have abundant opportunities for physical exercise both inside and out. They have regular access to a range of well maintained large and small equipment, to promote both large and small muscle control. Staff encourage children to enjoy physical activities, for example, by joining in enthusiastically to dance to music. Children practise fine muscle control through adult led craft activities, using a range of tools and equipment, for example, children use brushes, scissors, glue sticks, rollers and stamps to create their pictures.

Children's health is effectively promoted through good hygiene routines, such as the thorough wiping of tables before snack time and regular reminders to wash hands. Children enjoy nutritious snacks and drinks. Staff join children at snack time and talk about how food helps them grow and stay healthy. Staff give clear information and guidance to parents to help promote healthy lunch boxes, for example, children's lunch boxes must include an ice pack and are stored safely in a cool bag. Children have many opportunities to learn about how their bodies work through routine discussions and planned topic work, such as 'how we grow'. Children learn good independence skills through putting on dressing up clothes, pouring their own drinks and preparing snacks.

Children's health and well-being benefits from the staff's clear understanding of the procedures for administering medication. There is a system in place to record any accidents, however, staff and parents do not always fully document or sign these records, thus children's health following an accident might be compromised. There is always a member of staff on duty who holds a paediatric first aid certificate, therefore any minor accidents may be appropriately dealt with.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have created a warm, welcoming and interesting place for children to play and learn. The garden is secure and has been developed to offer a safe all-weather area

for outside play and exploration. The entrance is made welcoming with notice boards and helpful information. Parents and children can comfortably wait inside before the session starts.

Children enjoy a safe environment in which to learn and play. Staff have developed a comprehensive risk assessment procedure and have a high regard for ensuring children are safe when undertaking activities, both within the pre-school and in the local environment. Staff take advantage of high ratios of staff to children to go on local outings, when children can learn and practise road safety.

Children are kept safe, because staff have a clear understanding of good procedures to ensure children's safety. For example, the premises are securely locked and a clear policy ensures that only authorised people are allowed to collect children. The child protection policy is clear and shared with parents; staff know how to recognise signs of abuse and what action to take if they have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are making good progress in all areas. All children are supported effectively to join in planned activities and account is taken of any particular learning needs children may have. The pre-school special educational needs coordinator and staff have good relationships with a local support services, who work with children with learning difficulties and disabilities. For example, a speech and language therapist visits the group weekly to support a child and staff welcome the opportunity to develop further skills, such as learning Makaton. Children who speak English as a second language are supported sensitively, and the group seek help and guidance from specialist services when needed.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children learn through play in both adult-led and child-initiated activities. They enjoy good relationships with staff, who spend time talking and listening to them and children are confident and keen to learn and settle quickly. The staff share responsibility for planning for children's learning and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are encouraged to make choices about their own learning, but sometimes they are restricted by the accessibility of resources. Staff are aware of this and plan to re-organise and re-label equipment and resources, to enable children to make more decisions about their own learning.

Children practise their mark making skills using different tools and media with adult direction, and enjoy using their skills independently when labelling their own work or 'writing' in the role play corner. Most children are able to identify their own names and some can clearly write simple names and words and understand that writing has a purpose. Children are developing an understanding of numbers and are able to recognise numerals and count objects. They use mathematical language to describe size and position in everyday activities, such as designing and constructing models with different materials.

Children are making particularly good progress in knowledge and understanding of

the world. Staff plan exciting opportunities for children to learn and marvel at their world. For example, children brought in snails to observe from their gardens, they were fascinated to discover how they moved and the marks their trails left on black paper. They showed great respect for the creatures and were concerned to make sure they were re-housed safely. Children learn to value the lives and beliefs of others through meaningful activities, for example, children share favourite foods brought from their own homes. Visitors come to the group to talk about their lives and occupations. For example, the local emergency services visited the group and children enjoyed trying on fire officer's helmets and using the hoses.

Staff make and record observations about children's progress towards the early learning goals, but these are not yet maintained consistently for all children. Staff plan for next steps in learning for individual children, but planning is not always linked with children's records. Consequently, children's next learning needs are not always identified and some children are not appropriately challenged to extend their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy and behave very well. The pre-school staff talk to children about expected behaviour and how their behaviour affects others. Good behaviour is appropriately praised and rewarded by staff. Children are confident and settled and show good self esteem. They learn about the lives of others and enjoy experiencing a wide range of different cultures through celebrating the festivals of others. Parents share information about their children's care needs on registration and informally, through discussions and good relationships built with staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are given clear information about the pre-school and are invited to share the children's assessment records on request and on more formal meetings. The notice board and newsletters give information about the term's topics and parents are invited to contribute resources. For example, one parent brought in pets from home for the children to handle and observe. Parents find this useful to learn more about the way their children learn. The prospectus includes clear information about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered. Children learn to think about the need to consider the needs of others and develop a sense of belonging through routines such as clearing up time. Children celebrate festivals from their own and different cultures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The stable staff team work together to plan a range of play activities, to promote children's learning and development. Staff are deployed effectively, to ensure that children are safe and well

cared for, because there are clear policies and procedures in place. The manager has researched recent changes to the National Standards and has brought most policies up to date. There are good arrangements in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff, however, the system for ensuring the continuing suitability of existing staff has not yet been completely updated. All staff are appraised annually and the training needs of individuals and the pre-school are identified and planned for. The staff are well qualified and all are committed to on-going professional development.

The pre-school have completed a quality assurance award and value the opportunity to reflect on their progress and to continue to evaluate the quality of nursery education on offer.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the group were asked to develop the rear garden to provide further outdoor play space and to update the policy for lost and non-collected children. Both recommendations have been thoroughly addressed and the children now enjoy a safe, secure and exciting garden, where they can play and explore throughout the year. Parents have worked closely with staff to provide funding for improvements to the garden and children love the space where they can grow vegetables and watch snails. The non-collected and lost child policy has been updated and includes comprehensive procedures for staff to follow.

Complaints since the last inspection

In April 2005, a concern was raised about the changing of nappies. The concern related to the following National Standards: Standard 3 (Care Learning and Play); Standard 7 (Health); Standard 9 (Equal Opportunities); Standard 10 (Special Needs, including special educational needs and disabilities); Standard 12 (Working in partnership with parents and carers).

Ofsted asked the Registered Person to investigate these concerns. The Pre-School replied with a full report and a recommendation was made in relation to Standard 3, that the registered person ensures that staff provide support and guidance to meet individual children's needs and to promote their welfare. The provision remains suitable for registration.

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):

- ensure all accident records are fully documented and signed by staff and parents
- improve arrangements to check the continuing suitability of staff

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to access and freely choose resources to support child-initiated activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk