



## Noah's Ark Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	251429
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Nicola Mary Eileen Matthews
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<b>Registered person</b>	Noah's Ark Nursery Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Nursery group was previously known as Bures Pre-School Playgroup and opened in 1971. It operates from one large room in the Bures Village Hall, on the Suffolk, Essex border. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:05 to 12:00, during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. Children who attend live in the local community and surrounding villages. The nursery supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well through clear and well documented policies and procedures to follow to ensure health and hygiene guidelines are promoted throughout the setting. Children follow good hygiene practices and know they must wash their hands prior to snack time, after messy play and toileting to minimise cross-infection. Their minor medical emergencies are dealt with appropriately by staff who have completed first aid training. Children who are ill are cared for well as staff have a clear policy to follow which includes exclusion times for some common childhood ailments.

Children's individual dietary needs are effectively catered for as they enjoy a varied snack-time menu such as, marmite sandwiches, raisins, cucumber slices and cheese. They are able to self-select a snack and drink during the session to top up their energy levels and quench their thirst. The more able children can distinguish between healthy foods such as fruit and not so healthy foods such as junk foods and they can recall that sweets make your teeth go bad.

Children have plenty of opportunities to experience fresh air as they have long periods of time playing outdoors. They are developing their balance and coordination as they ride wheeled toys, expertly manoeuvring them around each other.

Younger children's emotional well-being is exceptionally well supported through the outstanding practice of settling the under three-year-olds into nursery. They take home the attractive play-size suitcases and scrap book about the 'Birth to Three' matters framework. The case contains activities such as a familiar story with finger puppets and the scrap book has information about the components and photographs to illustrate each aspect of the framework.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure setting maintained by rigorous regular risk assessments and evaluation of practices when incidents occur to ensure children's safety at all times. For example, changing over the entrance door after an unsafe incident occurred at the main doors. Children access outdoor play which is made secure by permanent and temporary fencing to ensure they cannot leave the premises unsupervised. They benefit from a well maintained and clean building which is warm and safe as hazards are identified and minimised regularly. However, the recently introduced snack bar does not allow children to access the book shelves safely.

Children safely access the very good quality play resources presented daily as they are attractively set out on table tops, the floor and in boxes before they arrive. They play with clean sand in the garden because when not in use it is covered and benefit from a risk assessed area of the tennis courts to safely throw balls and run around freely whilst being enclosed by a high fence

and secure gate. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff use opportunities that arise during the normal daily routine to reinforce, like reading stories, safety issues when out with parents such as, staying close.

Children's welfare is paramount through the adoption of a clear and comprehensive child protection policy which staff know how to implement should children's welfare be compromise. All the staff have attended child protection training which has given them the knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse to ensure any concerns are dealt with effectively.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to feel settled and confident by the warm and welcoming environment they enter each morning. They confidently leave their main carer and take an active part in the session. The younger, new children are given very good support to ensure their emotional needs are met well and they settle quickly. Children experience a well paced routine which they are comfortable with. They self-select activities throughout the morning and come together at the end for story and song time which fosters their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

The younger children participate in all the activities available and enjoy persevering with the toy trains to take them through the tunnels and over the bridges. They explore different coloured paint as they dip cut vegetables into a variety of colours and then print onto paper. Children are able to build on their existing knowledge as they handle the familiar soft toys such as Tigger and the Tellie Tubbies and match them to appropriate books from the exciting 'browse box'.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children benefit from a planned curriculum that is based on topics to encourage their exploration and experimentation by using their senses like taste. They experience a stimulating environment indoors and outdoors which encourages them to self-select activities during the session. Children are presented with interesting resources to support their language development such as story and song sacks. However, they have limited opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge by using appropriate resources each session. Some opportunities are missed to extend the more able children's play and provide a challenge to support their natural curiosity and progress because the resources are not readily available. For example, there were no magnifying glasses and bug viewers to examine ants found in the sand.

Children's assessment records are regularly updated by their key worker who identifies the next step which is then discussed amongst the staff on an informal basis to enable them to support individual children's learning. Children's achievements are recorded using the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance document to ensure they are making progress towards individual early learning goals.

Children are excited, interested and motivated to speak in large familiar groups describing shows they went to see and objects they have bought in to show to the others. They are learning

new words to extend their vocabulary as the staff encourage them to think about how their breakfast tastes, for example, crunchy. Children listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, songs and rhymes and explore a few letter sounds. They thoroughly enjoy stories in large groups. They listen intently to the narrative which is made exciting by the storyteller's tone of voice and use of a puppet. Children sit mesmerised and live the escapades of the little duck, Daisy.

Children investigate objects and materials using all their senses as appropriate, supported by the current topic of taste. They find out and identify some features of living things such as caterpillars and butterflies. Children are able to experience outdoor play regularly where they explore the natural environment and grow sunflowers and record the flower heads they observe using collage materials. They enjoy exploring colour as they spend time creatively using finger paints and making vegetable prints. Children are beginning to explore how sounds can be made and changed as they listen to musicians playing wind instruments and beat African drums. They sing simple songs from memory and creatively match movement to the words.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are making a positive contribution to their play opportunities as they independently choose activities, either indoors or outdoors, throughout the session. They very confidently enter the setting each day and are conformable with the routine. They take some responsibility for the environment as they help tidy up and meet their own personal needs, such as when to have a snack and how much to eat and drink.

Children are learning about their local environment and the wider community as they visit the tennis courts nearby and go further a field on trips to a farm. They handle toys and other resources that show positive images of the wider world and participate in activities based on their own and other's cultural festivals. For example, the festivals of Christmas and Diwali which enables them to develop an awareness of similarities and differences in other's beliefs.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported appropriately as the nominated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) follows the guidance set out in the Code of Practice 2001 to ensure they progress in their development. They are supported well in their play as they benefit from her knowledge as she is currently attending the SENCO training.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They know what is expected of them and demonstrate a good understanding of this by explaining how they behave towards new children to make them feel welcome and foster their sense of belonging. For example, they explain they have to play with them, help them, not to fight and to share. They are developing a very good understanding that there needs to be an agreed code to work harmoniously together and are able to sort out their own minor disagreements amicably such as, sharing the attractive yellow digger in the sand play. Children play alongside each other, negotiating roles and taking turns well. They celebrate each other's birthdays and enjoy enthusiastically singing happy birthday as a whole group. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, cultural, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's assessment records are effectively shared with the parents so they can see what their child has achieved and contribute to this if they so wish. Parents can become involved in their child's early education by volunteering to be part of the management committee and share their expertise such as playing a musical instrument for the children to listen to. Children take home books and other resources to enable parents to participate in their early learning. Parents are provided with clear well written information and policies and procedures to ensure they understand the organisation of the nursery and what their children will be doing. They receive frequent newsletters and participate in several fundraising events throughout the year. If a parent should make a complaint the file is easy to use and reflects current legislation.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's health, safety and well-being are supported by clear and well written policies and procedures that are available for parents to read. Children are looked after by staff who are caring and sensitive to their individual needs. They have attended appropriate training such as, rap, rhythm and beat, and use their knowledge to enhance children's experiences when singing songs to enable every child to become engaged and want to participate fully in the activity. Children benefit from management and staff who are enthusiastically developing the outdoor environment to provide a wide range of activities to support their overall development.

The leadership and management is good. The manager provides knowledge and expertise to the management committee to ensure the smooth running of the group and continually strives to add to the play resources and enhance children's safety. The nursery has built up good relationships with some of the children's next setting which ensures they continue to build their sense of belonging and settle quickly. Training is given high priority and staff contribute to the planning and the updating of the developmental records using the key worker system. Children experience a good range of activities each session to support their learning across most areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, more attention is required to provide the older and more able children an appropriate challenge to extend their play and effectively progress in their learning. Staff work well with the Early Years Development Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) to evaluate and improve the setting. They are developing the use of innovative self-evaluation forms to document clearly what they do well and how they can improve the experiences for young children attending the nursery.

The standard of records is good which ensures children's individual care needs are met well. The nursery has an effective system to record children and staff's attendance. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve children's access to resources, engage in social interaction during snack time and consider providing a computer. Children experience a wide range of books which are made available every session in either the large book case or the low-level 'browse box'. They self-select resources throughout the session which enhances their self-esteem and quality of play including programmable toys. The snack-time has been

developed to encourage children to sit in small groups to eat and they are supported by an adult who encourages conversation.

Some of the transport documentation required improving. Driver's appropriate insurance is now in place which ensures the safety of the children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any actions 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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### **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):

- evaluate the snack-bar position so children can safely and easily access books at the same time.

#### **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):

- develop the resources, which are made available each session, to build on children's natural curiosity and provide a challenge to enable children to extend their play to progress in their learning
- provide children with meaningful opportunities to develop their mathematical development throughout every session.

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