



## Noahs Ark Weston

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY224711
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 December 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Vernon
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<b>Registered person</b>	Noahs Ark (Weston)
<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 pre-school is a privately run group which opened in 2002. It is situated in the converted loft of an old Victorian school, in the High Street, Weston, Bath. It is accessed from the path leading to All Saints Church. Children use the pre-school room and occasionally a small side room or large hall downstairs. A tarmac area and enclosed grassed area are available for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open daily in term-time from 9.15 to 12.00. There is an afternoon session on Wednesdays from 12.15 to 15.00. There are currently 31 children aged from three to five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education.

There are six members of staff of whom three hold appropriate early years or a teaching qualification. One member of staff is working towards a level three qualification in early years. The pre-school is visited by the local authority's support teacher.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from effective routines that promote their good health. They are cared for in a clean, bright environment where staff follow clear routines that support good hygiene. Children understand the importance of regular hand-washing and enjoy using wet wipes before they eat at snack time. Regular drinks of water are available and children learn about healthy eating following an imaginative change to their snack time. Parents are encouraged to provide only fresh fruit or vegetables and children enjoy comparing and describing what fruit they have enjoyed such as melon slices or kiwi fruit.

Staff gather information from parents on any special dietary or medical needs and plan how to support them consistently. This helps children and parents feel secure. There is a clear written policy of not taking children who are infectious which is shared with parents. This helps prevent possible cross-infection. Accident and medical records are kept and shared with parents as appropriate which ensures consistency of care for the children. The staff team have current first aid training which ensures they are able to assess any accidents effectively.

Children's welfare is supported by daily physical play which is offered both indoors and outside in the enclosed play area. Indoors, children balance on low level beams and shapes and hop through hoops which develops their large muscle skills. They learn to stretch and crawl during games with the parachute. Children develop their small motor skills well, making models from wooden construction kits or using tools with play dough.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where risks have been effectively addressed and minimised. Staff perform a daily safety check of all areas and ensure equipment such as safety gates and socket covers are in place. This enables children to move around safely during play activities within the routine of the day. This develops their independence. For example, children move safely between art work or table activities and take themselves to the toilet area. Appropriate written permissions are in place for outings, such as visiting local shops. Children develop awareness of their own safety through play and topics such as singing road safety songs or practising road crossing with staff dressing as a 'lollipop lady'.

The playroom is bright and attractive and welcomes both children and parents with notice boards and work displays. The room has been well organised to provide different areas for craft work and messy play, with carpeted areas for circle and story time. Resources and play activities are set out ready which enables children to move smoothly into play when separating from

parents or carers. Toys and play equipment are modern as well as safe and suitable which makes them attractive to children.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and the signs that may cause concern which supports children's welfare. However, understanding of the procedure to be followed if any concerns arise is not as secure. A written child protection policy is in place and is available to parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled in the group. Staff plan well in advance and prepare resources before the session. This means children enter happily and are keen to explore play activities set out. A good balance of free play and group activities are offered which are planned and linked to topics. This means children participate in a range of activities that stimulate their learning and curiosity. For example, children freely explore around the room and under tables using magnifying glasses, binoculars and torches. Staff are sensitive to children's individual stage of development, for example helping each child participate in placing figures on the story board during group story time. Staff build good relationships with children by giving warm praise and encouragement which encourages children to persist and enjoy their play.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan an interesting range of learning opportunities for funded children. The staff team have a clear understanding of how children learn and skilfully use open questioning to prompt children's thinking, for example asking 'what do you think might happen next?' in story time. The staff team make regular observations on children's responses during learning activities. These are fed into children's records which help staff evaluate learning. However children's profiles are not always used effectively to link back into short-term planning in order to identify the next stage of learning for each child.

Children are confident within the group and show positive attitudes towards learning. They develop independence as they make choices about their play. Children enjoy taking small responsibilities such as when being the day's special helpers which builds their self-esteem effectively. They enjoy good relationships with both staff and each other and work well in both small and large groups such as working together putting toys away.

Children are confident communicators and contribute their comments within activities or to each other, such as when using torches under tables, saying 'look, there is only floor under here'. They value books and know print has meaning, noticing labels around the room. Children have good opportunities to recognise and attempt to write their own names, such as finding their name labels and tracing around letter shapes. They learn to write for different purposes such as mark-making a shopping list and 'writing' addresses down for the fire engine to go to during role play.

Children count confidently within daily routines such as in circle time and confidently name mathematical shapes such as a circle and square during a shape-matching game. They use mathematical language appropriately such as when describing their play-dough cakes as bigger than others. Simple addition and subtraction is practiced when children add paper leaves to a paper sunflower plant 'growing' up the wall.

Opportunities to learn about their community and the natural world are offered through growing plants such as cress and walks to local shops to buy fruit. Community visitors such as a nurse and fire fighter help children learn about people who help us. A variety of activities linked to different festivals help children learn about other cultures, for example they painted rangoli patterns during Divali and made a Chinese dragon for a Chinese New Year dragon dance. Children learn the value of technology through using sequencing toys such as torches and radio controlled cars.

Children have opportunities to design and make their own models using construction kits and a variety of textures and media such as rock plaster and play dough. They enjoy using paint and tools to construct models such as snowmen or making wheels for a cardboard-box fire engine, but they do not always have free choice of creative materials in order to develop their own ideas. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and learning about how sounds change with rhythm and when using musical instruments.

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

The provision is good.

Staff get to know children well through meetings with parents and they support any individual needs such as special diets or medical needs. Any individual learning difficulties are monitored and staff work with other professionals such as speech therapists to ensure children are supported and feel valued. All children are included in play, with both genders enjoying role play in the home corner and dressing-up. A range of resources such as books, puzzles and dolls help children learn the value of diversity.

Children behave well and work harmoniously together, for example when tidying up toys. They enjoy taking responsibility for small jobs such as collecting cups at snack time. This builds their self-esteem well. The staff team use positive strategies for managing behaviour which include distraction and calm discussion. Children relish receiving stickers when they have been helpful which they proudly show to parents. Staff are good role models and they consistently support children's good behaviour with praise which builds children's confidence.

Good relationships are built with parents through settling-in visits and information gathering on forms such as 'All about me', which parents complete prior to starting. The group has an informative brochure which outlines the group's aims and routines. This helps parents feel involved. Parents and carers appreciate the warm greeting that they receive and the regular feedback on their children's day. Appropriate records are shared with parents which builds consistency of care. Notice boards and regular newsletters keep parents informed about the topic activities. Policies are made available though not all details are in place. Parents are encouraged to contribute their skills which helps them feel valued. For example, parents with musical skills visit with their instruments and play their viola and saxophone with the children.

## Nursery Education

The partnership with parents is good. Information leaflets introduce parents to the curriculum and topic plans are displayed which show learning links. Parents are pleased that record books which include photographs and children's work are shared regularly. They know that they can approach staff at any time to discuss their child's progress or share children's profiles as well as attending open days. Parents are valued and encouraged to share in children's learning, for example through helping children bring autumn leaves and conkers for nature discussions.

The group fosters children's social, cultural, moral and spiritual development. Children's individual needs are respected and children are supported in trying to behave well through the positive encouragement that is offered consistently. Staff encourage children to respect each other by taking turns to speak in circle time and listening to each other's comments. Children enjoy celebrating various festivals such as Christmas and Divali and they confidently talk about their own family experiences.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective recruitment and appointment procedures are used to ensure that staff working with children are appropriately cleared and qualified. Key staff hold early years qualifications and the leader's support for on-going training ensures that children benefit from interesting play experiences and good quality care. Staff ratios are exceeded which ensures children are well supervised and supported during play. Use of the areas is well organised in order to meet children's care and play needs. Resources are stored nearby so activities can be quickly rotated. This maintains children's involvement well.

Records, policies and procedures are in place that promote the welfare of children though some small details, such as those in the complaints policy are not fully up-to date. Children's individual records are shared appropriately with parents and are stored with regard for confidentiality.

## Nursery Education.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The ethos of the group is very positive. Children receiving a funded nursery place benefit from the leader's commitment to providing good quality nursery education. The staff team are enthusiastic about working together and all share responsibility for the delivery of the curriculum. They are keen and motivated by support for regular on-going training and by being encouraged to share their skills. All work together to observe children's progress in learning and to link their observations into children's records. However, the process to identify gaps in individual children's progress is not always consistently linked to short-term planning.

The group meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the group were asked to add contact details for Ofsted to their child protection policy. This is now in place as the policy has been re-written which supports children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection, the group were asked to develop writing opportunities and extend the use of mathematical language. Children now make marks and attempt their names on their work. They have regular opportunities within role play for mark-making which helps them understand that print has meaning.

The group were also asked to develop understanding and information on the Foundation Stage for both parents and staff. Parents receive information in leaflets and displays and staff have developed their knowledge through further training. Additionally, the group were asked to improve children's access to physical play equipment. The group have bought various pieces of equipment such as balancing beams and a parachute. They plan daily sessions of physical play and have acquired a fenced grassed area for outdoor play which support children's health and welfare.

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

Since the last inspection 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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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 policies such as the complaints policy have full details and are shared with parents
- refresh awareness of the child protection procedure

## **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):

- strengthen the links between planning, observations and children's profiles to ensure all children are effectively moved through the stepping stones
- extend opportunities for free creative play.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)