



Noah's Ark Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272287
Inspection date	31 October 2006
Inspector	Sally Hall / Janet Butlin
Setting Address	133 Babbacombe Road, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 3SR
Telephone number	01803 311442
E-mail	noahs@btconnect.com
Registered person	Noah's Ark Childcare Centres
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 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 Childcare Centre is a long established nursery, which was taken over by new management in September 2003 and is part of the Noah's Ark childcare group. The nursery is situated in the centre of Babbacombe, in Torquay and operates on two floors. There is an enclosed garden to the rear.

The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday all year round and is registered to care for up to 44 children from birth to eight years. After school care is offered for up to four children between the ages of five and eight years. There are currently 42 children enrolled at the nursery, seven of whom are in receipt of funding. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting, as are children with English as an additional language.

The majority of the staff in the nursery are qualified and the setting is overseen by a development worker from Noah's Ark Childcare Services. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean setting and standards of hygiene are good. Staff are vigilant in ensuring children are protected from infection and they learn about keeping themselves healthy. For example, washing hands before meals and after messy play. Children learn from a young age to be independent with toileting. Good procedures are followed when changing babies' nappies. Nappy changes are recorded and sensible procedures followed with staff always wearing aprons and disposable gloves. Children are well cared for in the event of accidents and if they become ill. There is a clear sickness policy and documentation in place. For example, staff ensure that accidents and the administration of medication are appropriately recorded and countersigned.

Children enjoy healthy meals and snacks that are prepared on the premises. Meal times are social occasions and good social skills are encouraged. Younger children are supported well and they learn to be independent with feeding themselves. Children's dietary needs are known and recorded. Menus are displayed and children's food intake recorded to keep parents well informed. Older children help themselves to drinking water and younger children's intake is monitored to keep them well hydrated.

Children enjoy the fresh air regularly in the nursery garden. They also go on walks to the nearby downs where they observe seasonal changes and benefit from exercise. Children's physical development is well supported, even when the garden is inaccessible, as staff set up exciting obstacle courses to help the children climb, balance and develop their co-ordination. Their health is further supported by themes and activities encouraging children to think about their bodies and the importance of healthy foods.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in two welcoming, bright play areas depending on their age. The premises are well organised to provide a safe environment for them to rest and play. Children move freely and safely, and they have a secure outdoor area to play in. They choose from a very good range of toys and resources that are set out well to give children easy access and variety.

Children are safe as the staff have a very good understanding of safety issues and regularly conduct risk assessments. They complete daily checks of the play areas to ensure they are free from hazards. Visitors are rigorously recorded so it is clear who is in the building. There are good systems in place to record the attendance of adults and children. However, this is not always completed promptly on arrival. This means it may not be possible to accurately identify who is on the premises at a particular time.

Children's welfare is further protected by the staff's good understanding of child protection procedures and clear policy and information to which they can refer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and very keen to settle and play on arrival. They choose from a good range of toys and planned activities. During each session there are opportunities for children to have free play as well as times when children are grouped together. Babies and young children are cared for by caring and confident staff who know the children well and respond appropriately to their needs. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework very well to provide suitable, interesting activities and introduce children to new play experiences. For example, using sensory materials and experimenting with pasta and making play dough. They use observations to plan for children's next stage of development. There are good arrangements in place to make the transition from one age grouping to another run smoothly. The staff know all the children well who are very secure and confident.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are happy, eager and enthusiastic in their play and have very good dispositions to learning. Children are enthused and inspired by committed practitioners who have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children benefit because staff use what they know about each child very effectively. They plan stimulating activities which interest each individual child and help them to learn. Plans show that a range of worthwhile activities are provided which cover all areas of learning. Plans are clear, informed, current and meaningful. They also show planned activities which can be used to challenge children and extend their learning as appropriate. Accurate assessments identify the next steps for children's learning and they respond well to appropriately targeted encouragement. For example, children benefit from the way in which staff use a child's interest or fondness for a toy as a starting point to inspire learning in a variety of areas. Excellent use is made of resources and these are attractively displayed to inspire imaginative play. For example, a bonfire of bricks crackling beneath sparkling cellophane representing flames, to the delight of the children. Space is very well organised and staff are deployed effectively to support children at all times. Children are always engaged and busy, as a well planned timetable ensures that the session moves along at a good pace.

Children are lively conversationalists and delight in sharing their news. They use and enjoy books and describe their favourite characters. They have opportunities to make marks and write, for example in their role play. Children count various objects in their free play and use rhymes and songs to reinforce their understanding. They learn about quantity through well presented cooking sessions. Construction toys and water play help children to make discoveries and design and build models. They watch closely as ingredients change shape and form as they make biscuits. They develop their small muscles by using tools such as dough cutters and intricate construction equipment. Children become enthralled in the process of being creative, as they explore the texture, colour and feel of collage materials. They are tuneful singers and enjoy dressing up to extend their imaginative role-play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are polite, confident and very well behaved. They cooperate well, for example passing pieces to each other as they construct their marble run. They take turns patiently, for example lining up to balance along a beam, and show great concentration in completing their projects. They develop a sense of pride and self worth as they succeed in their self initiated tasks. For example, successfully hanging up the dustpan and brush after helping to clear away. They are very proud of their completed artwork, and staff reinforce this by valuing their work and protecting it safely for them to take home. Children develop a sense of self through projects such as 'Ourselves' which supports children's understanding of cultural diversity, additional languages, and other means of communicating. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered. Children's individual needs are known and respected. Staff are confident in caring for children with disabilities and liaise closely with parents to ensure consistency of care and to promote their development.

Partnership with parents is good. Good systems ensure that they are able to have daily communication with the nursery regarding their children's needs. For example, by means of a daily communication sheet. This is augmented by frequent informal discussions. The nursery provides termly parents' evenings where they view their child's assessment records and discuss future targets. Children benefit greatly from their parents' understanding of how they are progressing as this helps them to support them at home. However, parents' opportunities to be involved in day to day activities are more limited as the weekly plans are not easily accessible to view.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised environment by staff that work well as a team and present as good role models. The staff have relevant early years qualifications and a commitment to on-going training. They relate extremely well to the children enabling them to be very secure, happy and confident. Children's documentation is recorded to ensure staff have all the relevant information to support their placement. It is stored securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained. All regulatory policies and procedures are in place and promotes good practice in the daily running of the nursery.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Regular monitoring ensures that the quality of the provision is sustained, and effective staff deployment ensures that sufficient time is available for thorough planning and assessment. This means that the needs of the children are met. Children benefit from staff's enhanced practice resulting from their ongoing professional development. They attend training to support their understanding of the Foundation Stage and receive ongoing guidance from professional agencies.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the nursery was recommended to ensure that the targets for the children are implemented more specifically to provide them with sufficient challenge and help them to move on to the next steps in their learning. The nursery is now using what they know about the children very effectively to plan activities that will interest them and help them progress. The nursery was also recommended to provide more opportunities for children to make marks for a purpose and improve opportunities for them to develop health and bodily awareness. Good emphasis is now given to supporting children's physical development. There are opportunities for children to make marks which are appropriate to their stages of development. Children's learning has benefited as a result.

The quality of care at the last inspection was judged to be inadequate. The nursery was given actions to improve standards of cleanliness within the nursery with particular attention to the kitchen and toilets. The nursery has improved the cleanliness in all areas used. This has ensured a clean environment for children to play and good hygiene procedures in place for the preparation of meals.

The nursery was given an action to improve safety within the nursery to minimise risks to children and ensure they are easily supervised at all times. Risk assessments have been rigorously carried out to minimise risks to children. This has improved safety and ensures children are safe at all times. They were also required to improve organisation to ensure levels of staffing are sufficient to meet the requirements for hygiene and safety. The daily running and organisation of staff has ensured that there are sufficient staff to promote good hygiene and safety with children at all times. This has improved the care of children. A further action was made to improve hand washing facilities to ensure children can access toilet paper, soap and hand towels at all times. Hand washing facilities have been improved enabling good hygiene being promoted with children at all times and their independence encouraged.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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 log 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:

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 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 that attendance of staff and children are promptly recorded on arrival.

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 way in which information is provided for parents to ensure it is easily accessible.

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