

# Noah's Ark Childcare Centres

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY262422
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark Childcare Centre was registered in July 2003. It is part of a privately owned, small nursery chain and operates from a refurbished three-storey listed building on the edge of the Barbican, close to Plymouth city centre.

The youngest children, aged under two years, are accommodated on the first floor, where there are two base rooms, a separate sleep room, toilet and nappy changing facilities. Children aged over two years are accommodated on the ground floor, where there are one large and two smaller base rooms, toilet and nappy changing facilities. There is an enclosed garden, accessible from the ground floor and first floor. The second floor accommodates an office and staff rooms.

A maximum of 59 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 88 children aged from birth to five years on roll, 20 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties/disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The group is open on weekdays, from 07:30 to 18:00, all year round. After school and holiday care is provided for children up to the age of 12 years, and there are currently three children registered for out of school care.

Nineteen staff work with the children, sixteen of whom are appropriately qualified and the other three are currently working towards relevant qualifications. The group receives support from the Local Authority, the National Day Nurseries Association and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well as the staff diligently implement a range of good hygiene procedures. For example, they wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies, preparing and serving food, they clean tables thoroughly before meals and ensure that sleeping children have their own clean bed linen. Children are learning the importance of good hygiene procedures themselves as even the youngest children are taken to the bathroom to wash their hands before meals. Children use liquid soap and paper towels when hand washing and follow pictorial guides to encourage them to wash thoroughly in order to limit the risk of cross infection.

Children are cared for well in the event of an accident or illness as there is always a member of staff on duty who holds a first aid certificate and each room has its own first aid kit. Children with specific medical conditions are further supported as some members of staff have attended additional training to enable them to administer specialised emergency medication. Staff and parents are clear about exclusion times for infectious illnesses which enables them to protect all children from the risk of infection.

Children are developing good healthy eating habits as they are offered regular meals and snacks throughout the day and are also encouraged to drink plenty of water to keep themselves well hydrated. Their snacks and meals provide a balanced, nutritious diet that includes fresh fruit and vegetables. Children's special dietary requirements are particularly well met as staff are very knowledgeable about individual needs and liaise closely with parents to ensure that children are offered appropriate meals and drinks.

Young children's emotional needs are met well as they develop close, affectionate relationships with their regular carers. Their growth and development is supported effectively as staff know them well and respond promptly to their individual needs, ensuring they have opportunities to sleep, eat and be active in line with their familiar home routines. Their mobility and physical development is promoted well as staff ensure they have access to appropriate resources and activities to encourage steady progress.

Children enjoy the benefits of fresh air every day that weather permits. They run and play in the secure outside play area, climbing and balancing on appropriately challenging apparatus. They develop their large muscles effectively as they crawl through tunnels and clamber over obstacles. Indoors, children enjoy jumping and moving along to their singing games which further supports their physical development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and secure on the nursery premises as there are appropriate procedures in place to monitor entry to and exit from the building, and to ensure that children are only collected by adults who are authorised to do so. Each age group of children has a designated play area that is resourced with equipment that is appropriate for their stage of development. Staff carry out daily checks in each room to ensure that the environment and resources are safe before children arrive. Areas are generally kept safe during the day as staff promptly sweep up sand and mop up water spillages to reduce the risk of slipping hazards. However, the older children are not always encouraged to keep their area tidy and resources are sometimes left on the floor.

Children are learning some important ways to keep themselves safe. For example, they regularly practise their fire drill and are able to evacuate the building quickly and calmly in the event of an emergency. However, staff do not always have a clear record of children's attendance with them when they leave the building.

Children are kept safe when on outings as in addition to assessing risks within the building, staff also assess risks associated with local walks and excursions. For example, they visit local attractions before taking the children there and they increase the ratio of adults to children when they are out walking.

Children's welfare is given appropriate priority as staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities for recording and referring concerns. There is an adequate policy in place to support staff in the safeguarding of children.

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

The provision is good.

Children of all ages enjoy their time at nursery. They are grouped according to their age and stage of development so that they can access appropriate resources and activities to support their progress and development.

Children under three years enjoy many play opportunities that staff plan carefully to encourage children's development. They use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to monitor children's progress and to guide their planning. Children are becoming skilful communicators as staff sustain conversations with them throughout the day and ensure there are times when each child receives individual attention. Children's first attempts at early language are rewarded by praise and encouragement. As they develop, children practise their language skills in different ways, for example by engaging in conversations on a telephone during role play. Children's progress as competent learners is encouraged by enabling them to engage in a wide range of activities throughout the day. They have opportunities to handle different resources, such as household items, fabrics and wooden toys, as well as commercially produced plastic toys. As they develop, their play opportunities are extended and they are able to initiate a range of activities such as art and crafts, role play, construction, enjoying books and exploring sand and water. Their progress is carefully monitored through regular observation, which helps staff to plan new targets and encourage steady progress and development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children have eager and enthusiastic dispositions to learning and are making sound progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of learning. A good range of resources are provided and activities planned, but a lack of attention to appropriate presentation, grouping and pace means that many activities lack focus. As a result some children become restless or disengaged, particularly if the activity is not presented in a way which meets their individual needs. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and describe valid potential learning outcomes for the activities they are supporting. Plans show that resources and activities are presented to cover all the areas of learning, but a lack of differentiation in the planning, and focus in teaching means that learning opportunities are lost, particularly during free play and some children receive insufficient challenge. Children are, overall, well behaved. Staff's attempts to establish an incremental reward system for positive behaviour have been well received by the children and they eagerly go to place their stars on the chart. However, the consolidation of this scheme is thwarted by children's lack of opportunities to demonstrate further positive behaviour as they have too many opportunities to become disengaged or play confrontational role-play games. Children talk about their experiences and love listening to stories. They make marks and some recognise their names, but opportunities to explore the sounds of letters and rhyme are limited. Some children spontaneously count their bricks, but are not consistently supported in this activity to extend their learning and understanding. Children competently operate computers when they have the support of an adult. They investigate the effects of magnets and eagerly explore the garden for bugs. However some activities are not fully exploited as resources planned for use are not available. Children develop their small muscles effectively as they join construction pieces together. They also become competent in the use of small tools such as scissors, but lack guidance in this area. Children paint freely, for example enjoying printing with pieces of fruit, and discuss the feel and texture of sand. Children take a particular delight in dressing up and small world imaginative play.

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

The provision is good.

Children are eager to discover what activities are available to them and greet their friends and playmates with enthusiasm. They are confident to talk to visitors to the setting, telling them about their activities and are keen to demonstrate their skills. They all help to tidy away resources at tidy-up time and follow agreed codes. Children are polite, responding politely at registration time and saying please and thank you at appropriate moments. Children listen to stories which promote consideration of others and which encourage them to empathise with the characters. They learn about cultural diversity in meaningful ways, for example, celebrating various festivals and playing with resources and looking at books with positive images. Over the whole nursery there is a conscientious approach to supporting children who have English as an additional language, and the setting is working on planning this more specifically into the nursery education curriculum. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have specific needs are supported well by enthusiastic and committed staff. Clear, well written individual plans are created to support their development and staff are experienced in working closely with local supporting agencies. Most staff are familiar with signing to support speech, and basic signs are displayed in the nursery to aid communication.

Children, over the whole nursery, are generally well behaved and all are very polite. They benefit from the clear and helpful policy which supports effective behaviour management strategies, for example, to manage any incidents of biting. Even the youngest children are encouraged to consider the effects of their actions and apologise. An extremely effective system in the toddler

room is warmly embraced by children as they remember to behave well for 'Boris' in the story book.

Children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes as all necessary information regarding their needs is obtained. They benefit from the warm welcome that is extended to their parents who talk freely to staff about their child's progress and development. Communication books are kept for the younger children and parents value this as a means of writing their own observations to help staff support their child. Parents hold the nursery in high regard and the nursery actively seeks parents' opinions in order to meet their needs. There are good systems in place to keep parents informed of regulatory procedures. With regard to the Nursery Education the partnership with parents is satisfactory. A parents' evening is held twice a year and progress reports are also provided. Children's assessment files are available to view, but these contain limited current information regarding how the setting is supporting children's progress. Parents are provided with some idea of the forthcoming themes and plans are displayed inside the playroom. However, these are very brief which limits parents' opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Robust recruitment and induction procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by appropriately qualified and suitable staff. All regulatory documentation is in place and there are many policies and procedure in place which are generally implemented appropriately to promote good outcomes for children. However, the procedures for recording the times of children's arrival and departure are not implemented consistently to ensure that staff always have access to a clear record of attendance, which compromises children's safety in the event of an emergency evacuation. Staff clearly record their times of arrival and departure but it is not clear from these records who is caring for the children in each group and how appropriate ratios are maintained. However, staff rotas are in place and the management team monitor numbers within the nursery in order to ensure that children receive adequate adult attention.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The setting seek support and guidance from the local authority advisers and continually review and evaluate their practice, setting new goals for the future. However, recent changes to the planning and presentation of the nursery education provision have not yet fully addressed plans for improvement. Some documentation regarding assessment is not easily accessible and plans do not reflect how activities will support individual children. The leader of this unit has a clear vision for improvement and is keen to begin to implement these plans.

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

At the last inspection a recommendation was raised to improve the learning opportunities offered to two-year-olds. Children aged two years now have many opportunities to choose from a wide range of resources and activities and to initiate their own play. These children clearly enjoy their time at nursery and are making good progress in their learning and development.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting were required to monitor planning to ensure that all aspects of the six areas of learning receive sufficient, regular attention and that practice reflects planning. This remains an area for development. They were also required to improve

ways in which parents are able to access information about the planned programme. Various strategies have been implemented to improve parents opportunities to access information about their children's progress. However, although the planning is displayed it is not totally clear to parents what children will be doing to support their individual learning.

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

Ofsted received a concern on 19 December 2006 relating to National Standard 1 (Suitable Person) National Standard 2 (Organisation) and National Standard 4 (Physical Environment) An unannounced visit was made. Three actions were set regarding the use of space, completion of risk assessments and notifying Ofsted of significant events. These actions have been met and the provider remains qualified 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.

## **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 satisfactory.

### **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 registers are completed consistently and clearly to provide an accurate record of children's times of arrival and departure and the staff who are caring for them

#### **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):

- improve implementation of the planning to give increased focus to timing, pace and grouping to ensure children are engaged and interested and that activities are presented to provide appropriate challenge
- give increased emphasis in the planning to the exploration of rhyme and sounds within words and mathematical development overall
- improve documentation to ensure everything needed to plan for children's development is easily accessible to all

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