

# Noah's Ark Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122408
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Patricia Jeffrey
<b>Setting Address</b>	Caterham Community Church, Coulsdon Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5NF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 330201
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Noah's Ark Pre-School
<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 satisfactory. 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 Pre-school has been registered since 1987. It is organised and run by Caterham Community Church and operates from the hall and rooms of the church which is situated in Caterham-on-the-Hill. The children also have access to a small enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. The provision mainly serves children from the local community.

The pre-school is open four mornings a week (excluding Tuesday) from 09:30 to 12:15. They also run a lunch club on Mondays and Fridays from 12:15 to 13:15. There are currently 26 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and all of whom hold valid first aid certificates. The manager is also a qualified teacher and the remaining staff have many years of experience between them.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a welcoming and clean environment, where they are beginning to learn the importance of personal care and hygiene through effective daily routines. They have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands before they eat, and after using the toilet.

All members of staff are first aid trained and there is a rolling programme to maintain this, which ensures they will be able to meet children's needs should they require first aid treatment. All documentation for the recording of accidents and medicines are in place and most are kept in accordance with the requirements and the guidance for good practice. However, the recording of some records is not consistent and parents' signatures are not always obtained to confirm entries. The first aid box contains some items that are out of date and medical wipes which must not be used without seeking prior written permission from the parents.

Children pay 10 pence a day to enjoy the 'healthy snacks' on offer, including fresh and dried fruits, cucumber, carrots, crackers and bread sticks. Staff ensure food complies with the children's individual dietary and religious requirements. Drinking water is available throughout the session, supporting the children's opportunity to drink when they feel thirsty. Drinks of milk and water are also offered at snack time. Children say grace before eating and sit in small groups which fosters their socialising skills.

Children enjoy a suitable range of activities, which contribute to their health. Children take part in daily physical activity such as taking part in gymnastic sessions in small groups and playing with the parachute. This helps the children develop their large motor skills and control of their bodies, as they move confidently with close support and supervision of the staff. Children also learn to balance and climb confidently on the climbing frame and when jumping on the trampoline. Children's fine motor skills are developed through activities such as making Easter crosses by threading beads and by the use of tools such as paintbrushes and scissors.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, child-orientated environment where they enjoy arriving in the morning to be greeted by the familiar staff and children. Children benefit from playing in a well organised environment where they can play freely and independently. Children have access to suitable and well-maintained equipment that is regularly checked. This means they are able to move around freely and independently.

Children also learn how to keep themselves safe with gentle reminders from staff when they put play dough in their mouths for example. The possibilities of accidental injury are identified and minimised through ongoing risk assessments. This means young children are able to move around safely.

The staff are appropriately deployed ensuring children are always well supervised and the security is effective, ensuring children cannot leave the premises without a suitable adult. Regular fire drills are carried out, which enable children to become familiar with the procedures to evacuate the building safely. There are detailed policies for non collection of children and lost children. These measures promote the safety of the children.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. However, the current child protection policy does not reflect the changes to the Safeguarding Children Board and does not detail the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, or the procedures to ensure that Ofsted is notified of such events. This does not fully support children's wellbeing.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attending the pre-school are generally confident within the setting and have built secure relationships with the staff, this fosters their emotional wellbeing. They arrive happily and quickly settle at an activity. Children are familiar with the daily routine and enjoy making choices about their play experiences and selecting their own toys and resources. Equipment is set out at low levels, which enables children to self-select their choice of activity and allows them to explore and investigate independently. They enjoy the company of the other children during the registration time when they sing, practise their counting skills and recite the days of the week. Being together with other children helps them to become sociable and confident in communicating.

Staff are developing an understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and are implementing it into their planning. They use observations of children's development to plan for their individual needs, but are not always consistent in the recording of these observations. Staff endeavour to evaluate these activities to try to ensure that play opportunities are appropriate, however this system is also not always fully effective.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the expectations for children's learning. They provide a generally suitable variety of activities and experiences for children, helping them to make steady progress in most areas of learning. Children were observed to greatly enjoy the activities that were provided, including experimenting with colours when mixing paints during hand printing and splatter painting and drawing a variety of shapes as part of the current theme. Staff create a welcoming environment where children's work is displayed. This shows children's work is valued and gives them a sense of belonging.

The staff work hard to provide lovely activities and experiences for the children, but these activities are not always evaluated and therefore do not always ensure that they are challenging for the children. This does not fully support the children who are motivated and want to learn. Children's individual observations are generally well written, although not all are up to date. This reduces the effectiveness of the observations and does not enable staff to use them to fully identify the next steps for each child's learning. Therefore they are not always used effectively to aid the planning for the children's individual needs. The manager is aware of these areas of weakness and has been proactive in addressing these. She has already arranged a meeting with the staff to discuss ways forward, including seeking additional support and guidance from the Early Years Development

and Childcare Partnership.

Staff develop very caring relationships with children. Children are confident, independent and have good self-esteem. They learn to co-operate and work together with their peers by playing games, taking turns and helping to tidy up. They relate well to one another and have formed good friendships. Children behave well and understand the rules and boundaries of the group. They respond to staff requests for good behaviour and praise for 'good sharing' or 'good helping' for example.

Staff are suitable role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning and endeavour to present activities in an enthusiastic manner. Some children are beginning to form letters when they write and some can recognise the letters in their names. The children have a variety of opportunities to write for different purposes, for example within the role play and 'office' areas, where various writing implements and novelty writing pads entice the children to write in their play. More able children can write their own names on their art work, describing the letter 'a', as 'a circle with a little tail' and the letter 'n' as being 'like a bridge'.

Children are able to sit and concentrate well. They relax in the comfortable and welcoming book area as they listen to and enjoy stories. They know how to handle and use books correctly and with care. They understand that print carries meaning as they 'read' the snack menu with their parents each morning and select their name tag to show they are present. The use of hand made signs throughout the setting, identifying the different areas such as the 'painting table', the 'play dough pals' and 'home sweet home', for the role play area, also helps to aid young children's reading skills.

Children have sound recognition of numbers below 10 and can generally count confidently by rote, with some of the more able children counting up to 15. They recognise the properties of shapes such as triangles, squares, hexagons and circles and use appropriate mathematical language during free play activities, such as big or small. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations such as counting the candles on a cake during an activity for example. They show that they understand simple addition and subtraction, when they guess how many children are still in the bathroom at registration time, by counting how many empty chairs there are in the circle.

Children have opportunities to use information and communication technology by using a computer independently. There are adequate opportunities to use programmable toys and equipment to aid their learning and to question why and how things work. Children are beginning to understand past and present, they discuss people, places and events in their own lives.

Children learn about themselves and different cultures and beliefs through topic work when they explore other cultures and religious beliefs. The group is a Christian based one and includes praise to God in their story telling and singing sessions. But they teach the children to respect other people's differences and acknowledge different festivals such as Chinese New Year, with activities including making a Chinese dragon head and performing a dance. These opportunities to study different cultures, support the children's understanding of diversity.

Children enjoy art and craft activities, such as drawing and painting. Cutting and sticking activities are provided on a regular basis and the children make good use of these creative materials and take home a variety of art work. Children are involved in music and movement sessions that encourage them to sing and move to the music and have opportunities to make and play musical instruments and experiment with sound independently.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcome and included in the setting because staff value and respect their individuality. Children feel good about themselves and learn to show respect for other people. They receive positive messages about people's differences which helps them to develop sensitivity towards others. Children have access to a meaningful range of activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. For example, a suitable selection of books, play food and dressing up clothes. Children learn about cultures that may be different from their own with meaningful activities relating to Chinese New Year, Easter and Christmas for example.

There are appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children behave well and know the routine and boundaries. Staff manage children's behaviour calmly and patiently. Children receive praise for good behaviour which promotes their self esteem. This also encourages children to respond effectively to any guidance and praise given. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnerships with parents and carers is satisfactory. Relationships with parents are friendly and supportive and parents feel welcome in the setting. Staff gather all relevant information on the registration form to ensure children are cared for according to parents' wishes. Parents and staff work well together and share information about children at the beginning and/or end of the session. 'Report week' is held twice a year, to enable parents to view and discuss their children's Surrey Child Profile records and to discuss their children's development with the relevant key-worker. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the pre-school, including taking turns on the washing up rota at the end of each session.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Space and resources are suitably organised to create an accessible environment for the children. The children are cared for by staff that have been appropriately vetted, due to effective recruitment procedures and the team work well together and are aware of their individual responsibilities. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development, and appropriate staff ratios are maintained, ensuring children are well supervised.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. The manager has taken suitable steps to address the recommendations from the last inspections and endeavours to ensure that the teaching and learning for funded children is improving. The manager demonstrates a sound understanding of the group's strengths and the areas that need improvement, such as the systems in place for the recording and evaluation of the children's observations and next steps in learning.

Most of the required records, policies and procedures which contribute to children's health, safety and welfare are in place and are generally well maintained. However, some are in the process of being updated and are currently not as required, but they generally work effectively in practise. Some medication and accident records are not maintained as necessary and daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are not always maintained to a suitable standard, in particular relation to the lunch club. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

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

During the last care inspection, the pre-school agreed to improve the range of positive images that are displayed and to ensure snacks were healthy and nutritious. The pre-school now depicts many positive images throughout the setting which promotes the children's understanding of diversity. Healthy snacks have now replaced the morning biscuit and ensure that children enjoy nutritious servings of fresh and dried fruit with breadsticks or crackers.

During the last education inspection, the pre-school agreed to improve their understanding of the Stepping Stones and to ensure that their observations on children's progress, were effectively linked into the programme for future planning. Whilst staff have received further training and are given more time during the sessions to write these observations on the children, there remain some issues that need further improvements. Whilst it is acknowledged staff have clarified their profiling and evaluation paperwork to reflect the Stepping Stones rather than just the Early Learning Goals, staff still lack confidence and knowledge in this system, which results in the observations still not being used effectively in the future planning. Subsequently, this results in weaknesses in the system when identifying if the children are making adequate progress. And also in assuring that more able children are being appropriately challenged in their learning.

During the last inspection, the pre-school was also asked to improve the organisation of the programme of physical play, so that children benefit and extend their learning when engaged in their gross physical skills. The pre-school now has access to the main church hall for physical play, and ensure this is included in the daily routine. This means children now have a suitable place to run and play freely within, therefore enabling them to develop their physical skills appropriately whilst having great fun.

### **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:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. 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 the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary and ensure parental permission is requested before the use of medical wipes

- update the Child Protection policy to reflect the change to the local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines and ensure this contains procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer and details of the procedure to ensure that Ofsted is informed of any concerns
- continue to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure younger children's individual needs are met
- improve medication and accident records, keep detailed records, signed by parents, of specific medication administered to children and of any accidents to children
- ensure detailed records are kept of visitors; including parents and ensure these and the lunch club records, are kept for at least two years from the last date of entry, or until after the next inspection.

### **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):

- ensure evaluations of focused activities are completed and show the learning aims or outcomes of activities for individual children
- ensure that children's assessments and observations are up to date and that next steps are identified and used to aid planning for children's individual needs, including challenging more able children.

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)