

# Noahs Ark Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	256794
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Katherine Powell
<b>Setting Address</b>	Loxley Community Centre, Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough, Cambs, PE4 5BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	07951 213 798
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Noah's Ark Pre-School
<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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark Pre-school opened in 1987 and is run by a committee of parents. It operates from the Loxley centre in Werrington, which is on the outskirts of Peterborough. The pre-school have use of the whole building including the fully enclosed outside play area. A maximum of 34 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school operates a variety of sessions each weekday during term-times. Morning and afternoon sessions are offered on Monday and Wednesday as the provision is open from 09:00 until 15:00. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday the provision operates from 09:00 until 12:00. Children also have the option to stay until 12:30 for a lunch time session each day.

There are currently 23 children on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area. There are currently no children attending who speak English as an additional language or who have been identified with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, three have completed appropriate Early Years qualifications and two staff are currently undertaking further training.

The setting receives support from a teacher advisor at the local authority. The pre-school has successfully completed a quality insurance scheme run by Peterborough city council and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is well maintained, clean and warm. High standards of cleanliness and effective hygiene practices help to minimise the risk of spread of infection. This is supported by clear written procedures, for instance regarding children who become unwell whilst at the setting. Children gain a good understanding of personal hygiene through effective adult support, for example, they meticulously wash their hands using soap prior to meal times, after using the toilet and after engaging in messy activities. Children's individual health needs are met as staff discuss these with parents on admission and maintain appropriate ongoing records. The majority of staff have undertaken appropriate first aid training and a well stocked first aid kit is in place. This ensures staff are able to deal effectively with any accidents. Appropriate systems are in place to record any accidents or medication administered to children. Overall, these records are well maintained, but staff are not always consistent in ensuring that parents countersign each entry in the accident book. Children have access to a comfortable reading area with large cushions if they need to rest and relax.

Children are well nourished. They are provided with an appetising range of healthy snacks and help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session. Children have good opportunities to learn about foods that are good for their bodies as they grow a variety of vegetables in the garden area. Children can watch the plants growing and help to care for them. Once ripe, they can enjoy eating them at snack time. Parents provide meals for children who stay for lunch. Staff actively encourage healthy eating through the information they provide to parents and their supervision over the lunch time period.

Children show excitement and enthusiasm as they participate in an extensive range of outdoor activities which fully supports their learning and development in all areas. Staff have established an excellent 'free flow' system which enables all children to enjoy lots of fresh air and outdoor activities according to their needs and preferences throughout the day. This enables children to benefit from excellent opportunities for vigorous, physical play with a wealth of equipment and apparatus. For example, children thoroughly enjoy ball games which support their coordination skills and shriek with delight as they blow bubbles and chase after them. Children competently climb, balance, travel over, under and through apparatus and skilfully change speed and direction as they enjoy the spacious outdoor play area. They display high levels of confidence when using the variety of equipment offered. Children competently use tools and resources such as scissors, cutters, rollers and tape dispensers. They develop very good small hand skills through manipulating play dough, mark making activities, using peg boards, threading beads and handling wooden blocks. All areas of children's physical development are very well promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. Children use high quality equipment and play materials and there are sound systems in place to check that they remain safe for

them to use. Staff pay good attention to safety issues when presenting toys and activities, ensuring that they are appropriate for the ages of children using them and allowing adequate space between activities to minimise the risk of trips and falls. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe through discussion at group times and by regularly practising the emergency evacuation procedures. Staff consistently reinforce safe practices.

Staff closely monitor access into the building and ensure children are very well supervised both indoors and outside. Children are protected from the risk of accidental injury because staff supervise them vigilantly and carry out daily risk assessments to minimise potential hazards. For example, the outdoor area is thoroughly checked before children go outside to play. Children are kept safe on outings because staff implement carefully considered safety procedures.

Children's welfare is very well promoted because staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection. They are fully familiar with the setting's policies and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of all staff within this.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the highly stimulating environment that is provided by staff. They are fully encouraged to initiate their own activities and make decisions about their play and learning. Consequently, children are highly independent. They move freely around the setting accessing a rich and exciting range of activities which fully engage their interests and foster their imaginations. Children are excited by the range of sensory activities on offer. They thoroughly enjoy sand and water play where they experiment with pouring, dripping, digging, splashing, floating and sinking. They squeal with delight as they swirl their hands in shaving foam and carefully observe the patterns they have made. Children become engrossed in their play and show sustained concentration. Staff skilfully follow the interests of each child and give them freedom to fully explore their learning environment. For example, a group of children initiated a game of 'fire fighters' whilst playing outside. The children informed a member of staff that they were hunting for clues as part of their role-play game. The member of staff took interest in the game and further enhanced it for the children by taking them inside and finding a box of magnifying glasses which they could take outside. The children beamed with excitement as they raced back outside and continued their search for vital clues.

Staff place a very high emphasis on promoting children's learning through outdoor play. Consequently, children have excellent opportunities to investigate, explore and observe. For example, children took delight in drawing around each other's bodies in chalk and then used their observation skills to make comparisons about size, shape and height. They take pride in nurturing their enclosed garden area. They enjoy digging in the soil, watching the changes as the plants grow and flourish and have fun picking the produce to enjoy at snack time. In addition, children also have access to a wonderful range of resources to promote their physical skills. As a result, children are very active and have excellent opportunities to practise and develop different movements and skills such as climbing and balancing. Children are extremely articulate and use a wide range of vocabulary to express themselves and communicate to others.

All children form warm and trusting relationships with the staff and develop a strong sense of belonging. The nurturing environment and the sensitive, caring nature of the adults providing their care helps children to feel totally secure. Excellent standards of behaviour are maintained. Children happily chat together, sharing their ideas and expressing their thoughts. Staff take time to listen to what children have to say and as a result, they feel valued and included. Children

display high levels of enjoyment and are clearly proud of their individual achievements. This is evident from their eagerness to show and describe their work to others. All children are extremely curious and are very keen to explore the full range of activities and learning opportunities presented to them.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Opportunities for children to develop their physical and personal, social and emotional skills are highly effective. Children work well together and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, children negotiate with each other and agree turn taking when playing alongside others. Children show respect for one another and staff and are kind and considerate. They are keen to learn new things and persevere with more challenging tasks. For example, a child attempted to fit a wooden block inside a box and concentrated on his task for an extended period. Through his endeavours he discovered that the box was too small and as a result concluded that he needed to choose a smaller block. Children enjoy learning about the culture, beliefs and celebrations of different people within society. They are confident and skilled speakers, using words effectively to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. They listen attentively to each other and join in enthusiastically during group story times. Children use toys and resources in the role-play area to make up their own stories. Children have access to a wide range of age-appropriate books which helps to foster their enjoyment of reading. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks and some children are beginning to write their names independently. They enjoy engaging in meaningful writing activities linked to their role-play games such as writing shopping lists. Children are developing a good awareness of letter shapes and sounds and benefit from seeing a wide range of print displayed around the setting. Children make good progress in mathematical development and confidently use numbers when counting and solving simple number operations. They use toys and number lines to support them, for example when counting forwards and backwards from a given number. They use a wide range of apparatus to explore different mathematical concepts such as capacity, weight and measures and they use appropriate language to describe position and compare size and shape. They enjoy exploring patterns and shape when playing with play dough, shaving foam and bubbles. Children have very good opportunities to find out about the natural world and enjoy exploring the outdoor environment. They learn how to care for living things and are developing their awareness of the conditions that plants need to grow. Children are developing their awareness of technology through the use of resources such as battery toys. Children talk with interest about past and present events in their own lives, such as going on holiday, birthdays and going to school. Children's physical skills are very well promoted through a rich variety of activities such as ring games and using large and small equipment. They are developing an awareness of their bodies and understand that healthy food and exercise are good for them. Children are encouraged to express their own ideas when engaging in creative activities. They enjoy painting, drawing, model making and role-play activities. Children delight in initiating their own imaginary games both indoors and outside. For example, when playing on the sit-on rides they delight in going on imaginary journeys. They join in enthusiastically during group singing times and have access to a wide range of musical instruments. Children enjoy experimenting with sounds and had great fun imitating the sound of an elephant using a piece of plastic tubing in the water tray.

Children achieve well as a result of clear planning and assessment systems and effective teaching methods. Staff know children very well and skilfully adapt activities to meet their individual needs. As a result, children are very well supported and receive appropriate challenge. Staff have a good awareness of their role within an activity and extend children's learning through

effective questioning. Staff make good use of individual assessments to identify children's achievements and to plan the next stage in their learning. However, staff do not gather information when a child starts at the setting regarding what they already know and can do. As a result, staff are not able to fully identify each child's starting points. Staff provide a rich and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors to engage children's interests and enable them to enjoy their play and learning experiences.

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

The provision is good.

Children are extremely well behaved and learn what is expected of them as staff set clear boundaries and use consistent strategies. Children show a good sense of belonging as they warmly greet staff and each other upon arrival. They work well together and develop their awareness of the need to play cooperatively during group activities. Children form good relationships with each other and the staff help them to understand each other's needs through careful explanations that young children can understand. Children's self-esteem is very well promoted as staff give them lots of praise and encouragement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The special needs co-ordinator at the setting is well trained and knowledgeable, ensuring that children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities are well supported. Planned activities and stories help children to learn about other members of society and they are able to access a suitable range of multicultural equipment in play situations to extend their learning. Children learn about the local community by going on walks and discussing familiar places and buildings.

Children settle well because staff work closely with parents to share information. Parents are able to discuss their child's care and learning at any time with a designated key worker. Parents receive appropriate information about the setting, and their views are actively sought. On-going information is shared through informative notice boards, regular newsletters and a useful handbook. This contributes to consistency of care for children. The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes positively to the well-being of children in receipt of nursery funding. Children benefit from their parents being actively involved in their learning. For example, parents come in to talk to children about their jobs and they have access to activity plans within the setting. Parents are invited to come in to the setting to help with play activities. Staff suggest activities which parents can do at home with their child to further develop their learning and skills. Staff have developed some useful written information about the Foundation Stage curriculum but this is not readily available to parents when their child starts to receive funding. Staff regularly share assessment records with parents to keep them informed about children's progress and development and parents are encouraged to add their own comments and observations. Consequently, parents have good opportunities to share in their child's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation of the setting and the good leadership and management of nursery education. The premises and play resources are very well organised to fully promote children's independence skills. Staff make excellent use of indoor and outdoor space to maximise play and learning opportunities for all children. All legally required

documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and shared with parents.

Children benefit from being cared for by consistent staff who are skilled, experienced and well qualified. Staff are well deployed and high staffing ratios are maintained ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities. Staff are encouraged to undertake further training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of relevant issues.

Leadership and management is good. Staff work well together as a team to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and ensure children achieve well. Staff receive very good support from the supervisor, who delegates roles effectively to ensure all staff develop their skills and knowledge. The provision is effective as all staff and the committee are committed to providing good quality care and education for all children. Effective systems are in place to monitor the provision, such as staff appraisal, accessing support from a teacher advisor, and holding regular staff meetings. In addition, the setting has successfully completed a quality assurance scheme which has supported staff in identifying key strengths and areas for further development. Staff have implemented appropriate planning and assessment systems to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently covered. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last care inspection one recommendation was raised. This related to ensuring the complaints procedure was made available to parents.

Details of the setting's complaints procedure is included in the handbook for parents and also displayed on the notice board. This ensures parents are fully aware of the procedure to follow should they wish to raise a concern. Staff have taken positive action to address the recommendation which has helped to further improve the partnership with parents and carers.

At the last nursery education inspection one recommendation was raised in relation to ensuring a range of physical activities are provided indoors when the outdoor area cannot be used.

Staff provide an excellent range of opportunities for children to develop their whole body movements and small hand skills indoors. These are available to children at every session and include activities such as ring games, music and movement, threading games, jigsaws and water play. Staff also make very good use of available equipment such as tunnels and safety mats to enable children to practise movements such as rolling, crawling and jumping indoors. This has helped to further improve the provision for promoting children's physical skills.

### **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

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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 entries made in the accident book are always signed by parents.

#### 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 information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum is easily accessible to parents and carers
- continue to develop assessment systems to identify clear starting points for children's learning to support staff in building on children's existing knowledge and skills.

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)