

Noahs Ark Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105882
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Julie Neal
Setting Address	Cullompton Baptist Church, High Street, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 1AA
Telephone number	01884 35586
E-mail	wendy@noahsarkplaygroup.fsnet.co.uk
Registered person	Noah's Ark Playgroup
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 outstanding. 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 Playgroup is a committee-run group, which operates as part of Cullompton Baptist Church. The playgroup uses the main church hall, a small hall, kitchen, toilets and enclosed outside area. It is open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 09:15 to 11:45, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 09:15 to 15:15, the setting is closed on Fridays. The playgroup is registered to provide care for up to 27 children, aged from two to under five years, at any one time. There are currently 48 children on roll, most of whom are in receipt of funded nursery education.

There are seven staff who work with the children, all of whom have appropriate child care qualifications. There is also a manager, who deals with administration. The playgroup receives support from a foundation stage advisory teacher and belongs to the Pre-school Learning Alliance Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and wellbeing is extremely well supported. They are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, where staff implement rigorous daily routines that ensure all areas are hygienic. For example, frequent checks are made of toilets and washbasins, and these are cleaned as needed; tables are thoroughly cleaned before meals and snacks, and children are provided with plates, in order that there is no risk of cross contamination for children who have food allergies. Children learn very well about personal hygiene, showing clear understanding of the importance of washing hands before meals and reminding each other to do so. Staff foster their independence in this area very well by providing additional washing facilities in the main playroom, which children use freely, for example to rinse their hands when they get messy in play.

Children's individual health and medical requirements are understood and supported very well. Any medicines administered are recorded appropriately. All staff have first aid certificates, ensuring that accidents and emergencies are promptly dealt with. Records of accidents to children and any treatment given are excellent, providing an extremely clear account, and these are shared with parents.

Children have excellent opportunities to experience the health benefits of fresh air and physical exercise. They play outside whenever they wish, enjoying an extremely good variety of activities and resources that promote physical confidence and co-ordination. They ride bikes and cars, negotiating space well and showing excellent control as they stop and start. They incorporate large equipment into imaginative games, enriching their play, for example a climbing frame becomes a house that Santa Claus must climb and a slide is a chimney to go down. Children are well co-ordinated as they throw and kick balls, for example enjoying lively football games and aiming accurately as they pass and score.

Children learn about foods that are good for them because staff are very effective in promoting their healthy eating policy. The setting runs a 'café' snack time, where children have the freedom to choose when to eat and drink, and to self select what they want. A choice of fruit is provided, and children are developing a clear awareness of the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables. There is an optional lunch club that children may attend, and parents provide packed lunches. Staff ensure parents are aware of the commitment to promoting healthy eating with children, and individual dietary requirements are noted and respected.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a bright, welcoming, and child friendly environment where excellent safety precautions ensure they can move freely between all areas. For example, children move between indoors and outside as they wish, and they can do so because very effective processes of risk assessment identify and address possible hazards, therefore, ensuring their safety. Children benefit from the staff team's excellent organisation of space and resources, that provides them with interesting and dynamic areas that support learning through play. For example, an extremely well organised art and craft area invites children to investigate the excellent variety of media and materials available for them to use as they wish; cosy areas where books are displayed well encourage children to explore pictures and words. There is an extensive array of toys and

equipment, supporting children's learning and development in all areas. These are extremely well maintained and excellent systems of checks ensure all resources remain suitable for children's use.

Excellent routines keep children safe on outings and excursions. For example, children enjoy local walks and staff map each route, identifying safe places to cross roads and where there may be possible hazards to take account of, such as parked cars. Children are well prepared, being taught about road safety and clearly understanding the purpose of pedestrian crossings. Children learn how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire because staff plan fire drills well, ensuring that all children have regular opportunities to become familiar with emergency evacuation procedures. Children are safe and secure within the setting because doors are locked and access is strictly monitored.

Children's safety and wellbeing is further supported by the staff team's excellent knowledge of child protection procedures and their understanding of their responsibility to act, should they have concerns regarding abuse or neglect. All staff have undertaken training to update their knowledge and skills, and they implement the setting's child protection procedures extremely well, in order to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children immensely enjoy the excellent variety of stimulating activities that encourage progress and development. Children are actively encouraged to make choices in their play and they are extremely confident as they move between different activities and eagerly explore resources. They are lively participants in planning what they do, making suggestions and voicing their ideas, which are listened to and respected. For example, children and staff discuss making 'Santa's Grotto', the children's ideas for doing this are radically different from the staff teams' suggestions, but are immediately adopted. The activity is immensely successful and a large group of children are actively engaged for a prolonged period, taking pride and ownership in what they do. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop through play, and they focus extremely well on the needs of individual children when planning, in order that all are well challenged and make very good progress. Children benefit from the excellent communication between members of staff, which ensures that all are aware of children's achievements, where they would benefit from being stretched and challenged, and areas where individual support may be needed to enhance confidence. Activities are extremely well organised to be accessible and inclusive to all children. For example, resources to support a card making activity range from simple motifs for sticking and decorating, to examples of more complex creations to inspire the most confident children to use different textures and materials; complex puzzles have areas colour coded on the back, enabling children to correctly identify the pieces to complete one section at a time, developing their skills and confidence in their ability.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan well to provide children with an excellent variety of learning experiences to ensure good progress in all areas. They promote a child centred approach to learning most effectively, with children taking a dynamic part in planning what they do, and providing children with an

excellent choice of activities. This ensures that children are eager and enthusiastic participants in learning. Written plans clearly identify the main learning objectives of activities and they are effective in identifying opportunities for extension and challenge. Staff identify key areas for development for children, and focus very well on promoting individual progress in learning. For example, discussing individual needs and identifying the next steps in learning for each child, and beginning to formalise this with the introduction of individual play plans. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is, overall, monitored well. Staff make good observations of what children do and share these well. There is a system in place to provide a record of children's progress towards the early learning goals, however, irregular maintenance of these means they do not consistently reflect children's achievements.

Children are interested and eager learners. They respond extremely well to the high levels of choice available to them, quickly becoming absorbed in chosen activities and concentrating very well. They are confident and relish opportunities to share their news and contribute to discussions. They communicate very confidently, responding well to encouragement to share their thoughts and ideas with each other and with adults. Children enjoy writing and mark-making, and practise their skills in different contexts, for example writing their names on the cards they have made, making lists of things they need for decorating 'Santa's Grotto' and writing in the appointments diary in the 'hairdressers salon'. Most children recognise familiar words, such as their names, and they recognise individual letters and letter sounds. Children demonstrate their very good understanding of mathematical concepts in the most effective way and they apply their knowledge in everyday activities. For example, children quickly identify when there are 'too many' people in the playhouse to comply with safety rules, and calculate how many children must leave; they confidently measure objects and identify when things are 'bigger', 'smaller' and 'the same'; they show spatial awareness, and a good understanding of shape and size as they discuss the ornaments being used to decorate a Christmas tree and consider where they should be placed for best effect. Children enjoy designing and building, engaging wholeheartedly in group projects such as creating 'Santa's Grotto' and having access to a variety of natural and man-made materials to use freely. For example, large boxes and recycled materials are used imaginatively to make a variety of vehicles in play. Children have excellent opportunities to develop confidence in using tools safely. They help themselves to scissors, carrying them safely and using with control. They use genuine tools, such as saws, hammers and nails as they cut wood at the workbench and construct boats to their own designs; they use knives to slice fruit as they help at prepare snacks. Opportunities for children to express themselves creatively are excellent. They benefit from access to a very wide range of resources that support imaginary and creative play. For example, children use paints, crayons, chalks and pencils freely to create their own pictures; they use clay and dough. They use exciting and interesting textures and fabrics as they experiment with their own ideas and representations. Children enjoy expressing themselves through singing and drama, and are eagerly practising new songs for their end of term concert for parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and confident. They have excellent self esteem because they are confident that they will be listened to and respected, and that their individual needs will be met. They benefit from an extremely inclusive environment where the staff team's understanding and implementation of equal opportunities is excellent. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support and are enabled to fully participate and be included in activities. This is because their individual needs are fully assessed, with staff working very

closely with parents and other professionals. Staff make excellent preparations to ensure that children for whom English is an additional language are included and able to settle happily. They work closely with parents to identify things they can do to support children, such as learning key words of the child's home language and using pictures, in order to encourage communication and aid understanding.

Children are extremely well behaved. They are very confident in their knowledge of ground rules and routines, and clearly understand the purpose of these. For example, they know that numbers of children using the climbing frame at any one time are restricted, and they understand that this is for safety reasons. Children enjoy being helpful, they tidy toys away and enthusiastically volunteer to help lay tables and prepare snacks. Staff have excellent experience of working positively with parents to address any behavioural issues in a constructive way, developing individual strategies that support children's interests and strengths, and enable participation. Very good management of everyday routines supports children's good behaviour and they benefit from the staff team's excellent understanding of the different ways children experience learning through play. For example, children move freely between all play areas, including outside, according to their individual interests. This means that active children have space to enjoy vigorous play, they do not become frustrated through being constrained, and their activities do not have a negative impact on other children. The result is happy and contented children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered. Children explore their own and each others home cultures and traditions, and learn to respect these. Activities and discussions effectively promote children's developing awareness of difference and diversity in society.

Staff work extremely well with parents to ensure children's individual care needs are met. Parents are provided with very high quality information about the setting through the effective use of notice boards, display space, and newsletters. Excellent relationships quickly develop between staff and parents, ensuring that information is shared and supporting the consistency of care for children. Parents and children benefit from the extremely good settling in procedures that enable them to become familiar with the setting and with key adults involved in children's care.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is outstanding. Excellent information is displayed regarding the activities children take part in and how these support learning, and photographs demonstrate children's engagement and enjoyment as they participate. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning in many ways, with staff providing ideas for activities they can do with their children at home that link to current topics, and children regularly bringing home books and games. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress towards the early learning goals, having regular one-to-one meetings with key workers and the opportunity to attend parents evenings.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for which they provide. Space and resources are extremely well organised, and provide children with a dynamic play and learning environment. Employment procedures are robust and ensure that staff working with children are suitable to do so. Excellent induction procedures ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and are knowledgeable regarding the setting's

policies and procedures that support children's wellbeing. All documentation supporting the care and wellbeing of children is in place and clearly maintained. Staff are well qualified and experienced, and children benefit from the consistent care of a securely established team. There is a strong emphasis on training and development for staff, and this ensures that children benefit from practitioners who are very enthusiastic and confident in their skills.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. There is a strong commitment to children's learning and development, and systems of planning, observation and assessment have been comprehensively reviewed. Staff hold frequent team meetings to discuss individual children's progress, and communication between members of staff is excellent. This means that activities are reviewed and adapted to provide very good levels of challenge and stimulation for individual children. However, children's records of attainment do not reflect the good progress children make, as there are inconsistencies in the maintenance of these. For instance, some documents are infrequently updated and so do not reflect current achievements, and staff do not make effective use of evidence available, such as written observations and photographs, that demonstrates children's progress in learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, recommendations were made regarding the improvement of care and nursery education. With regard to care, it was agreed to update the complaints procedures. This has been done, and reviewed further to take account of changes to requirements, for example ensuring that parents are made aware that the setting is required to keep a complaints record.

With regard to nursery education, it was agreed to consider how sessions are organised, in order to promote further challenge for all; and to consider the use of signs and displays in order to expose children to letters, numbers, and familiar words. These have been addressed well. Each session is extremely well organised, and staff plan well to provide appropriate individual challenge. Children benefit from a print rich environment. Letters and numerals are well displayed, resources and everyday items are clearly labelled.

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 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.

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On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. 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

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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):

- continue to develop records of children's attainment in order to provide evidence of the good progress children make in all areas of learning.

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