

Noah's Ark Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131822
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Inspector	Amanda Jane Tyson
Setting Address	401-403 Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 7DG
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Registered person	Noah's Ark Pre School Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Nursery has been registered since January 2000 and is run by a management committee. The setting is based in a purpose built bungalow within the grounds of Our Lady Immaculate Church, in Tolworth which is within the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames. The premises is within easy reach of local buses, schools, parks and a main line station. Children have access to two interconnected rooms, a quiet room, two toilets, and a secure outside play area.

The group operates five days a week from Monday to Friday, term time only for separate morning and afternoon sessions. There are currently 42 children on roll, of which 27 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language attend. The setting is affiliated to the Catholic church and admission priority is given to baptised Catholic children.

There are eight staff who work with the children. This includes a full time manager who is a qualified teacher. The remaining staff work a variety of part-time hours. Two staff are working

towards early years qualifications, four are qualified to NVQ Level 3, and three of these are currently on the early years degree programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good opportunities for outdoor play throughout the session greatly supports a healthy lifestyle. Children have access to climbing and balancing apparatus, they are able to run around, and practise pedalling skills. Children who are more reluctant to engage in robust physical play are encouraged outdoors by creative, imaginative and other curriculum activities. Furthermore, children enjoy regular walks within the community. As a result, all children benefit from fresh air and exercise. The daily provision of fresh fruit, savoury snacks and drinking water at snack time is laying the foundations for children to adopt healthy eating habits. However, they do not have free access to drinking water throughout the session. Children generally ask for a drink when they are thirsty, which indicates the onset of dehydration.

The premises and toys are kept clean and this, along with the setting's policy on the attendance of children who are unwell, helps to minimise the risk of cross infection. However, whilst liquid soap and paper towels are provided within the children's toilets, they are not easily accessible and there are no visual reminders. As a result, older children who take themselves to the toilet do not always remember to wash their hands properly. This compromises the otherwise good attention to hygiene.

Children are well cared for by first aid qualified staff if they become unwell or have an accident. Their health needs are supported through good record keeping, for example staff gather comprehensive information from parents prior to placement that pays equal attention to emotional and medical needs. Accident and administered medication records are all shared appropriately with parents who sign to acknowledge the entries, and their wishes in relation to children's health care are documented to verify their consent, for instance, to apply first aid and to seek emergency treatment if required.

Excellent attention is given to settling in new children according to their individual needs. The setting operate a procedure whereby parents spend time with children within the setting, and then leave them for increasing periods. September admissions are staggered to enable key staff to spend time with children and this is particularly helpful for those experiencing parent-child separation for the first time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and secure premises. The possibility of a child going missing from the premises or whilst on an outing is exceptionally well minimised by robust procedures. Tight door security during arrival and departure times, a password system for adults other than those known to the setting, and a good registration system ensures that children are all accounted for and released to appropriate adults. Visitors are required to show identification and their details are documented. Every outing is individually assessed for risks and this includes variations in the procedure to follow in the event of a lost child. Children learn road safety rules during the regular trips out within the community and are very secure in their understanding of the risks within the immediate school car park.

Children are able to play safely within the premises because prudent steps are taken to protect them from hazards. For example, a non-slip stain is applied to the outdoor decking, internal doors leading to other areas within the premises are locked, and electrical sockets are all covered. Children understand what to do and where to go in the event that an emergency evacuation is necessary because the procedure is practised every month. Play and learning resources are regularly checked to ensure that they are in good working order. The organisation of clearly defined play areas, for example arts and crafts, the computer, writing, reading and role play encourages frequent and varied visitation. Children understand how to use tools such as scissors safely.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have completed child protection training and are secure in their knowledge of the procedure to follow if they are concerned about a child. Parents are provided with clear written information that explains the setting's regulatory responsibilities. Records of all injuries sustained to children outside of the setting, no matter how minor, are kept in the same way as those injuries sustained at the setting. However, the organisation of combined accidents, existing injuries and administered medication together for all children compromises the effectiveness of monitoring purposes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The setting operate a very effective key worker system which enables staff to get to know individual children very well indeed. They use this well to ensure that children are fully supported in specific identified areas, for example, to help them settle into an activity on arrival, or to adapt activities to enable the inclusion of children with physical impairments. Relationships between staff and children are warm, affectionate and trusting; children are secure and confident and keen to engage in play and learning.

Children's strong sense of belonging is well demonstrated by the way in which they confidently move around accessing activities and resources, both inside and outside. Younger children benefit greatly from the way that activity and curriculum planning enables their inclusion with older children, but at the same time provides them with opportunities to be together in age related groups, for example, story time which ensures it is pitched at an appropriate level. Younger children's rapidly developing self-esteem is well demonstrated by their confidence in singing into a microphone alongside older children. They are inspired by the ideas of the older children and as a result, are keen to attempt new skills, for example using scissors and recognising their names during register time. The organisation of play and learning areas which encourage children to make their own decisions about where they play and with what, is particularly beneficial to younger children with shorter concentration. Children have fun experimenting with musical instruments which are well placed to enable easy access. They explore paint, sand, water, soil and a variety of malleable foods such as pasta.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from staff's secure understanding of how children learn through undirected play opportunities. Activities and play areas are well planned and organised to incorporate multiple learning opportunities. For example, children play letter matching and number games, explore nature, engage in role play as they manoeuvre cars in and out of parking bays, as well as enjoying robust physical play outdoors. They help themselves to recyclable boxes, tubes and creative tools to design and build objects which they then use in purposeful play. Staff use their secure knowledge and understanding of children's

individual learning needs, obtained through meticulous recorded observations during the session, to encourage and support their all round development. This is achieved through activity adaptation; incorporating children's preferred play choices with less popular ones, for instance, enticing boys to use a pencil and paper by creating opportunities with outdoor pretend play. Collective developmental observations are used effectively to inform assessments and to plan for children's next steps of learning.

Children are making good progress to all six of the early learning goals. They are becoming confident and articulate communicators, which is well demonstrated during circle time discussions and the way that they use language to negotiate with others and to solve practical problems together. All children recognise their names in print. Many older children are able to write part of their name, can recognise letters contained in their name, and link some of them to the correct phonetic sound. Staff encourage this consistently and naturally as they interact with the children. A wealth of print around the setting, coupled with the accessibility of writing resources, encourages children to write with a purpose in mind, particularly within role play. Children enjoy books and staff make good use of them to deliver simple moral messages, such as the importance of being kind to each other. Children will, from January, benefit from the planned introduction of a 'take a book home' scheme, for which Santa is going to supply a smart book bag similar to what children will have when they start reception class the following term. The action plan for improvement shows how children will be encouraged to share their thoughts about their books after a week of reading it with parents.

Children count routinely during adult led activities, but also spontaneously during play. Older children are beginning to learn to differentiate between basic and solid shapes, such as a square and a cube. Children explore and experiment with weight, volume, capacity and measure regularly, for example, during water play, baking activities and when they compare their size as they learn about each other.

Children build and design working models using construction such as cogs and wheels and enjoy designing interesting train tracks. Children are becoming competent computer users; most children know how to select programmes, click and drag the mouse to complete challenges or to create their own paint effect designs. Children benefit greatly from the well planned thematic activities, such as when they used a camera to take pictures of the garden before and after Autumn which highlighted how the seasons changed trees from luscious green leaves to bare branches. Children's awareness of ethnicity differences is raised by lovely posters around the setting and some play resources depicting positive images of diversity. However, overall the commitment towards enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of wider world differences within all activities is not given enough attention.

Children throw themselves into the creative arts with enthusiasm. Their confidence has no boundaries when they act out a full stage performance. Microphones, cameras and a pretend stage all add to the effect and they confidently sing solo with gusto. It is very clear that the children are keen to act. They are terribly excited and are looking forward to performing the Nativity for parents. Opportunities for children to explore colour and texture are a daily feature.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents and carers is good, for both care and nursery education. The high levels of communication between the setting and parents is a key strength of the provision. Parents are well informed about the operational and regulatory policies and procedures, and

are fully involved in the planning of individual care and learning programmes for their children. They are provided with clear information explaining the terms activity and curriculum programme, and are secure in their knowledge of identified areas for children's development. This is achieved through regular opportunities to meet with key staff to discuss and view children's progress and assessment records towards both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the early learning goals. As a result, children receive consistent learning support from the setting and home. Parents highlight the newsletters and scrapbooks containing samples of children's learning, and the thrice yearly written developmental reports as something that they particularly look forward to.

All children, including those with identified specific needs are welcomed into the setting. Key staff have completed specialist training so that they are best placed to support children with physical and/or learning difficulties. These staff work closely with the local area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Staff show how much they value the children's contributions by displaying their creative work and giving them opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as the daily helper. However, although it is acknowledged that the setting is affiliated to the Catholic church and that all current attending children are of this faith, not enough attention is given to enabling all children to act out their home experiences because activities such as role play, do not include enough culturally diverse resources.

Children behave well. They are kind and considerate, particularly the older children towards the younger ones. Children share and take turns routinely without the need for adult intervention, for example, when they use the computer, or microphone to sing as they practise their 'stage performing'. The levels of cooperation between the children, for instance, as they work out how best to join two train tracks together is inspiring. Staff tackle challenging behaviour, when it arises, sensitively by delivering simple messages through stories and discussions. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently monitored and evaluated. Management have been proactive in seeking support from the local authority early years teaching advisors and in implementing their astute advice. Team meetings are regular and the daily briefing and de-briefings between the staff enable activities to be adapted or extended to meet children's developing needs. The setting's strong commitment towards continual improvement is further demonstrated by the numerous changes made to the organisation and presentation of the indoor and outdoor learning environment, which enables children to access the curriculum independently. Management recognise the benefits of supporting staff to develop their knowledge and skills through extensive training. For example, three staff are on the early years degree programme and they are already beginning to explore and use the early years Foundation Stage (EYFS) practice guidance. Management are enthusiastic and keen to further develop the provision. This motivates staff and enhances the quality of nursery education for children.

Children are cared for by a consistent team of thoroughly vetted, experienced and suitably qualified staff. The key worker system is highly effective and staff deploy themselves well to provide children with the necessary support and guidance. Children are consistently absorbed in their play because they are able to move around and choose what they want to do without being overly directed.

The administrative system for recording behavioural incidents supports monitoring purposes well. However, the organisation of combined record keeping for accidents, administered medication and existing injuries, is not so well organised. Nonetheless, overall all required records and documentation are maintained. With this exception, children's welfare, care and learning is well supported and promoted. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection for care raised six recommendations for improvement, all of which relate to records and documentation, and all of which are now in place and shared appropriately with parents.

The last inspection for nursery education raised two recommendations, which also relate to record keeping. The setting now monitor children's progress and development towards the early learning goals thoroughly. They use the information gathered to build individual learning programmes for every child.

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 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):

- make drinking water constantly available to children, and find ways to remind them to wash their hands properly after using the toilet
- improve the organisation of records relating to accidents, existing injuries and administered medication to support good monitoring purposes.

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):

- provide more regular opportunities for children to learn about the cultural and religious beliefs of others, but in particular ensuring equal access to resources that reflect all children's individual home experiences (also applies to care).

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