

# Noahs Ark Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117135
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Heather Morgan
<b>Setting Address</b>	Noah's Ark Childcare Centres, 20-24 Lucas Terrace, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 9LD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Noah's Ark Childcare Centres Limited
<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 is privately owned and opened in 1996. It operates from a converted chapel in the Prince Rock area of Plymouth and serves parents from the local area as well as those commuting to work in the town centre.

The nursery is registered to care for up to 32 children from three months to eight years. There are currently 50 children enrolled, of whom 18 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery is open five days a week, 50 weeks a year, from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday.

A staff of 10 work with the children, of whom eight hold a relevant qualification and a further two are working towards one. Regular support is also provided from the proprietors. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority. They are members of the National Day Nurseries Association and gained quality assurance accreditation in 2006.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing good, healthy eating habits as they are offered nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. They enjoy a choice of cereals and milk at breakfast time, fresh fruit at snack time, balanced cooked meals at lunch time and a range of healthy tea time snacks. Children with special dietary requirements have their needs met well as there is good communication with the external caterers. Older children can help themselves to drinks whenever they are thirsty and younger children are offered regular fluids throughout the day to ensure they are well hydrated.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene as they become familiar with hand washing routines after using the toilet or before eating. They carefully wash their hands using liquid soap, then dry them on disposable paper towels to limit the risk of cross infection. They are further protected from the risk of infection by the implementation of clear policies such as excluding children with infectious illnesses and cleaning tables and nappy changing mats with anti-bacterial sprays.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident as all members of staff receive first aid training and can easily access first aid kits that are stored throughout the nursery. Children's continuity of care is supported well by the use of clear documentation for recording and sharing information regarding injuries and the administration of medicines.

Most children in the nursery have regular opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air, where they can run around and exercise their large muscles. They use equipment such as balls and a slide to develop specific physical skills and engage in games that help them to control their movements. Younger children enjoy climbing on soft play equipment indoors, and crawling through tunnels.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a safe, secure play environment. Effective procedures are in place to ensure children cannot leave the building unsupervised and that visitors to the building are appropriately monitored. Indoor and outdoor play areas are kept safe as staff undertake daily checks of the premises, in addition to the regular review of risk assessments that identify potential hazards.

Children learn about the importance of staying safe as they are given clear explanations about the rules they follow at nursery. For example, they know that if they run around indoors they might hurt themselves or someone else. They regularly practise fire drills to ensure they can evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency.

Children play with toys and resources that are maintained in a good condition and have been carefully organised to ensure they are developmentally appropriate for each age group. They are stored at low levels so that babies and children can make independent choices and safely initiate their own play. Children are well supervised as they play and are supported by staff in developing the necessary skills to use equipment with increasing control and safety, for example when they are creating patterns using hammers and nails to secure wooden tiles.

Children's welfare is given high priority as staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues. There are clear policies and procedures in place to support staff in carrying out their recording and referral responsibilities in the event of a concern.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children of all ages engage in a range of activities that generally supports their progress and development. Children under two have opportunities to socialise with older children and to play in their own base area. However, lack of appropriate furniture and use of available play space restricts some of their opportunities to engage in physical play and develop their mobility skills, and activities do not always provide sufficient challenge to sustain their interest. They have opportunities to choose toys and initiate their own play, and to enjoy close, affectionate relationships with the staff who care for them, for example whilst they are being fed or listening to stories.

Children aged two years participate in a wide range of activities that they enjoy alongside older children and in their own small group. They regularly play outdoors and are introduced to new experiences and learning opportunities through planned activities that link to themes and topics. However, these activities do not reflect their own interests and it is not clear how they support individual children's progress and development. Staff observe children at play, track their development and identify new targets to support their progress, but this information is not used to plan activities that encourage them to achieve these targets. Some activities do not reflect their level of development, for example when all children are grouped together to listen to a story.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a basic understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a range of activities that support children in making some progress in each of the six areas of learning. However, they are not always clear what the learning objectives for the activities are and this results in missing opportunities to support children's learning during spontaneous play and daily routines.

Children are lively and enthusiastic learners and are confident in selecting and using the range of resources available to them. They use language effectively to organise their play such as when working together to construct a train track. They are developing good listening skills and beginning to learn about the names and sounds of letters. Many children have good pencil control and experiment with making marks on paper, but they are not encouraged to incorporate this in their play activities and begin to explore the different purposes for writing, for example during role play. Children are beginning to count confidently and recognise numerals but are rarely encouraged to use their developing awareness of number to solve simple problems. Children design and construct models using a range of commercially produced and man made resources. They have opportunities to explore materials such as water and sand and to experiment with colours and textures during craft activities. However, they cannot freely access a wide range of materials to initiate these activities for themselves. Children use a range of role play and small world resources to develop imaginative games, although these are not always extended through the sensitive interaction of staff to encourage children to extend their learning and explore a wider range of real life experiences.

Staff observe children at play and evaluate their progress in order to identify next steps for learning. However, this information is not used effectively to plan activities that support individual children's development. Consequently, planned activities often lack sufficient challenge to encourage older, more able children to make rapid progress along the stepping stones, and younger, less able children are not always supported in achieving appropriate learning objectives.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individual care needs are met well through close communication with parents. Daily discussions at drop off and pick up times are supported by communication books that are used by staff and parents to promote children's continuity of care. Children with specific needs receive extra support, where appropriate to ensure that they enjoy their time at nursery and can access the activities of their choice. Staff liaise with parents and external agencies to plan individual programmes to support children's progress and development.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They enjoy very sociable meal times when children of all ages get together, giving siblings opportunities to see each other throughout the day. All children have opportunities to share their own familiar celebrations and events with their nursery friends and resources such as books and role play equipment are used to promote children's awareness of diversity. Children's behaviour is good and they are able to play together well as they have a good understanding of the need to share and take turns. They respond well to the regular praise and encouragement they receive from staff that positively reinforces their good behaviour. Staff provide good role models that help children learn to use good manners and treat others with respect.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive some information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and are aware of the themes their children explore. However, there is insufficient information regarding how planned activities support children's learning to encourage parental involvement. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and know that they can access their children's development records if they choose. However, they are not encouraged to contribute to these records or agree children's next steps for learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by a team of staff who have been carefully selected using robust recruitment procedures to ensure they are suitable. Regular training opportunities and support from a senior management team help staff to gradually develop their skills and experience.

Daily routines are generally organised appropriately to provide children with a familiar structure to their day, with opportunities to rest, play active games and get together for sociable meal times. However, the organisation of some group sessions such as early morning arrival times does not always support the individual needs of children attending. Space and use of resources in the area used by children under two does not always meet their developmental needs. For example, there is insufficient space and furniture to support them in developing their mobility and physical skills.

All regulatory documentation is in place, along with additional policies and procedures to support the smooth running of the nursery. Clear records of attendance are kept for children, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management of the nursery education system are satisfactory. Senior staff members observe delivery of the curriculum in order to identify strengths and weaknesses within the programme. Staff appraisals are undertaken to identify training needs, but these procedures are not always effectively followed up to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to address identified weaknesses. Staff welcome the support of external advisory agencies and are working towards action plans set to improve learning opportunities for children.

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

Following the last inspection the nursery has improved procedures for keeping children safe by implementing more frequent fire drills, ensuring that children attending after school are recorded on the attendance log and keeping Ofsted informed of all significant changes and events.

Due to recent changes, some members of staff still require additional guidance on how to maximise the potential of spontaneous learning opportunities in order to support individual children's progress.

### **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 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):

- provide a wider range of activities for children under two, that stimulate and challenge them and support individual children's progress and development
- improve staff deployment, use of space and resources to ensure that children's individual needs are supported at all times

## **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):

- develop the planning and assessment cycle to provide activities that challenge and support all children, building on what they already know and can do, to encourage their progress and learning
- develop all staff's abilities to maximise the potential of spontaneous learning opportunities when children are initiating their own play

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