

# Noah's Ark Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY269854
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Whitelaw
<b>Setting Address</b>	Shephall View, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1RR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 749090
<b>E-mail</b>	enquiries@noahsarknursery.com
<b>Registered person</b>	Noah's Ark Day Care Nursery
<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 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 Nursery registered in 2003. It operates from a single storey purpose built building with an office and staff accommodation comprising of a kitchen, children's bathroom, an open plan pre-school and toddler area, as well as an enclosed baby area. It is situated in the Bedwell area of Stevenage in Hertfordshire. A maximum of 73 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30, for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to the secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 74 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 19 staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from a qualified teacher and an Early Years Development Worker.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from fresh air and their health is promoted to a satisfactory standard as they go outside in the enclosed play area each day. Their physical development is promoted well as they independently access the well-resourced environment. Children confidently climb the climbing frame, ride bikes and build with large bricks. Babies have space to crawl and confidently explore their environment and the toys. Games and action songs engage children in physical activity and encourage them to develop a positive attitude to exercise.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. They learn about hygiene during the daily routine. They are encouraged to independently wash their hands when necessary and learn why they need to do this. They demonstrate their understanding as they explain that they need to wash the germs away so that they do not get sick. Children's health is promoted as there is a large canopy in the garden providing shade. Sun cream is applied before children play outside, therefore protecting them from the sun. Policies and procedures are in place to promote children's health. However, children who are sick on occasions are allowed to play with other children and injuries that children arrive with are not effectively recorded. This potentially compromises children's health. Effective procedures are followed when nappy changing that promote children's health. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and therefore have the knowledge to deal with an accident or emergency.

Information is obtained from parents regarding children's dietary requirements. This is shared with staff and effective procedures are followed to ensure children's needs are met. Children benefit from nutritious meals and snacks that are freshly prepared by the cook. Parents are consulted when new menus are introduced. This ensures that they are involved in their child's care. Children can independently access water which ensures that they stay hydrated.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are carried out that ensure potential hazards are identified and addressed. For example, socket covers are in place and gates prevent children going to areas they should not access. Staff place high priority on the security of the environment. The outer door is always answered by a member of staff and the inner door has a coded key pad system. This ensures unwanted visitors cannot gain entry to the nursery. The outside play area is fully enclosed by a high wall and safety surfaces reduce the risk of injury if children fall. Generally staff are well deployed to promote children's safety. However, children's understanding of safety when using the outside equipment is not always reinforced. For example, there is no restriction to the number of children playing on the climbing frame. This potentially compromises their safety.

Children independently access a wide range of toys that are well-organised and stored in low-level containers. These are regularly cleaned and checked to ensure they are safe for the children who attend. The setting has recently reorganised the grouping of younger children to ensure that they use suitable furniture at meal times. This promotes their safety and well-being.

Children are protected as anyone who has not been vetted is never left alone with children. Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and procedures and the action

they should take if they have any concerns regarding the welfare of a child in their care. Children's safety is promoted as effective recruitment and vetting procedures are followed.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and develop a sense of security through the close relationships that they have formed with their peers and the staff. They independently access a well-resourced environment. Children quickly engage in play and are keen to take part in appropriate, worthwhile activities supported by staff. Planning is in place that covers all areas of learning and newly introduced assessments increase staff's knowledge of what stage children are at and enables them to help children make progress in their learning. Babies have space to explore and staff focus on experiences, such as exploring shredded paper which promotes their sensory development. Toddlers attentively listen to stories. They inquisitively observe the changes to corn flour as water is added and show delight as they move their hands around the tray of mixture. Staff use praise and encouragement which promotes children's confidence and self-esteem.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Since January staff have improved their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to a satisfactory understanding. Medium and short term planning is in place and long term planning is being developed to provide an overview of what children will learn. The organisation of the indoor environment has been improved, new resources have been obtained and these are well organised in labelled containers. This ensures that children make choices in their play and promotes their independence. However, the planning for outside play and large group time does not always effectively promote children's learning. New systems have recently been introduced to observe and assess the progress children make and staff have started to use this information to inform planning.

Children participate in adult-led activities and also have time for free play. Staff are well deployed to support children in their learning. Management are supporting staff to develop their knowledge of different teaching methods they can use to help children make progress. Most staff listen attentively and value what children have to say. Some staff are skilled at asking open-ended questions that extend children's learning. Children who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support. For example, staff use flash cards and speak clearly to children, repeating words and praising children when they do the same. Individual educational plans are in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which promotes their learning. Some staff effectively manage children's behaviour but this is not consistent amongst all staff and potentially hinders children's learning.

Children form close friendships with their peers and confidently interact with adults. They show independence in selecting and carrying out activities but ask for support when necessary. Children are keen to participate in planned activities. They develop an understanding of their own personal needs. For example they are able to say what they want to drink at snack time. Through planned activities children learn about cultural differences. Children show an interest in books and predict what will happen in familiar stories. Staff use props to effectively hold children's attention. They encourage children to link letters and sounds during the daily routine. Children are beginning to independently use the recently introduced writing area.

Children have opportunities to count during the daily routine. For example, they count up to 13 as they line up to go out to play. Staff develop their understanding of calculation as they ask how many there would be if there was one more. Children compare size as they build towers and learn about shape as they complete jigsaws. Children show an interest in information and communication technology and are keen to use the computer. They independently control a mouse and complete simple programmes. Children develop control as they use tools, such as rolling pins and cutters with play dough.

Children use their imagination well as they build pirate ships with large bricks and pretend they can see sharks. Staff support their play and extend their learning. Children happily sing songs and join in with the actions. They have opportunities to explore musical instruments during planned activities. Children develop an understanding of the properties of different materials, for example, as they play with sand and water. Children can independently access craft resources for free creative expression and have opportunities to practise skills, such as cutting. There is limited planning for outside play. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well on arrival. The recently introduced daily routine promotes a sense of security. Children develop a feeling of belonging as they are warmly greeted by staff on arrival. Their backgrounds and cultures are respected and valued. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they see their named photos and work displayed on the wall. Their understanding of the wider world is promoted through an adequate range of resources, such as books, dolls, small world toys, instruments and play food. Children learn about different cultures and festivals through topic work.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting. One member of staff has recently completed training in this area. Effective procedures are followed that ensure that children with specific needs receive appropriate support. Individual education plans are in place that promote children's learning. Staff are aware that they may need to adapt activities or obtain additional resources to ensure children's needs are met.

Most staff manage children's behaviour in a calm, consistent manner and generally children behave well. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour. However, some staff lack knowledge of effective strategies to use if children display negative behaviour which results in the behaviour being repeated. Management have organised training from outside agencies for the near future to extend staff's knowledge of this area. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the effective partnership between the parents and staff. A welcome leaflet outlines the setting's aims and some of the policies and procedures. General information evenings keep parents informed and updated of the changes that are taking place in the setting. Parents are encouraged to view the photos displayed around the setting that show activities that children are involved in and discuss what they are learning. A verbal exchange of information takes place for children in the pre-school. Parents of younger children receive written information about the care provided. Parents report that staff are friendly and that many improvements have been made since January, including improved planning of the daily routine and methods of communication.

The partnership with parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality information about the Foundation Stage. Planning is now displayed and recently introduced newsletters keep parents informed of the topics that are being covered and how parents can extend children's learning. This ensures that they are involved in their learning. Systems to share the progress that children make are not currently in place. Management are planning to introduce parent evenings in the near future. Limited information is obtained from parents about what stage they feel their child is at in their learning. This potentially hinders their development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

A new management team have been in place since January and many improvements have been made since then. Staff teams within the nursery have been reorganised to ensure children's needs are met. Regular meetings now take place and strong teams are forming. Staff are committed to developing their knowledge through training to improve the outcomes for children. The management team work with the children, are good role models and encourage staff to reflect on what they do to improve their practice. Resources, organisation of the environment and planning have improved since the last inspection. Management are aware of further improvements that need to be made and the need to ensure consistency amongst all staff's knowledge and to improve the outcomes for children. The required documentation is in place.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. A new team of staff have recently been formed to care for funded children. Planning and assessment is now in place and staff have a satisfactory knowledge of how to challenge children and move them onto the next step in their learning. Systems are in place to monitor the delivery of nursery education. Management have a clear understanding of the areas that need improvement. They observe staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses and formal appraisal systems are being introduced to promote staff's development. Management are starting to track the progress children make to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection an action was given to ensure that the correct adult to child ratio is maintained at all times. Staff now ensure that ratios are maintained both within the setting and in the outside play area. This is checked and recorded four times throughout the day by the managers which promotes children's well-being.

The setting was also asked to ensure that positive steps to promote safety within the setting were carried out and proper precautions taken to prevent accidents. Staff have received training on how to promote children's safety in the setting. Daily visual and written checks are carried out to ensure the indoor and outdoor environment is safe which promotes children's safety.

An action was set to ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Written policies and procedures have been updated to ensure that they comply with the LSCB. Staff have completed training and now have a sound knowledge of child protection and a clear understanding of what action they should take if they have concerns regarding a child's welfare. This promotes the safety of the children who attend.

An action was given to ensure that staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to enable children to make progress. Staff have developed their knowledge to a satisfactory standard through team meetings, support from outside agencies and training. This is an area that continues to be a focus for further development.

Another action was to ensure that all children are challenged and that staff have a high expectation of what they can achieve. Newly introduced assessments have increased staff's knowledge of what children can do and staff are gaining confidence of how to extend their learning to the next step. Management will continue to develop staff's knowledge of how to do this to ensure that children are consistently provided with challenge.

A further action was to organise groups effectively to ensure that children make progress towards the early learning goals. The grouping of children has been reorganised and a key worker system is in place. Children complete focus activities in their key groups and these are good learning experiences that enable children to make progress. However, large group time is less effective and remains an area that needs to be improved.

### **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 that details of any existing injuries that children arrive at the setting with are recorded and that procedures are followed when children are ill
- promote children's safety when using the outside equipment
- develop further staff's knowledge of effective strategies to use to manage children's behaviour.

#### **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 further the planning and organisation of the indoor environment, outside play and large group time to ensure children's learning is effectively promoted
- ensure that parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child and that staff inform them of children's achievements and the progress they make.

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)