

Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	218196
Inspection date	13/11/2008
Inspector	Lynne Milligan

Setting address	Holmcroft Youth and Community Centre, Newlands Avenue, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 1NL
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Noah's Ark Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1977. It operates from a large hall in the youth and community centre in the Holmcroft area of Stafford. The playgroup have their own toilet facilities and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Access to the entrance of the playgroup is at the back of the building and all areas are easily accessible. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 49 children aged from two years to four years on roll. This includes 12 funded three-year-olds. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term time only. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from 09:30 until 15:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Five staff work with the children. All are qualified to a level two, with the manager qualified to a level four.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are very well cared for in a fully inclusive environment that ensures the opinions and voices of both children, parents and carers are valued and respected. Management and staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the Early Years Foundation Stage and in meeting the majority of the welfare requirements to a high standard. All children benefit from a varied and well-planned range of activities that secures their interests and promotes their development. Effective systems to monitor the running of the setting are used to evaluate its performance, with a strong commitment from the manager to further improve good practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further the complaints policy to include up-to-date details of the regulator
- ensure the safeguarding procedure is implemented consistently to promote children's welfare and safety
- ensure hand washing procedures are thorough in order to reduce the risk of cross-infection and ensure children's packed lunches are healthy, balanced and nutritious
- appoint a named practitioner who is responsible for behaviour management issues
- develop opportunities that help children understand the elements of stories: with specific regard to the linking of sounds to letters and to explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts
- encourage children to use mathematical ideas to solve practical problems and promote independence through daily routines
- increase staff's understanding of how to provide challenges for children: with

specific regard to adult-led activities.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing, which includes an assessment of required adult:child ratios.

28/11/2008

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and education are promoted effectively as the management is dedicated to ensuring staff's knowledge and skills are consistently updated through regular training. Recent courses include speech and language therapy and behaviour and autism awareness and clearly demonstrates the manager's commitment to continuous improvement. Although these are not yet written, systems to monitor and evaluate the provision and to ensure improvements are made are strong and clearly identify areas in which improvements could be made. The setting liaises with parents effectively to ensure that all children's needs are well promoted, with any issues identified and acted upon promptly. For example, parents opinions are sought through informal discussion, activity sheets and questionnaires in order to evaluate the service, in addition to the 'request elephant' that children use to offer their views on how they would like to change activities or resources.

Staff show an extremely strong attitude to inclusion that upholds their impressive ethos 'to value each and every child in order to positively promote their development to its fullest'. Children's appreciation for others is significantly enhanced as they visit the local special school, exploring communication techniques such as Braille and makaton. They understand the many different ways in which children and adults can learn and begin to adopt a very positive understanding of the world around them. They explore the different languages their friends use through such activities as, singing songs in French and Italian, acting out the words using makaton with confidence and great accuracy. Their inclusive approach is extended further as they provide specialised equipment to children who are unable to take part in the physical activities, ensuring they are included and valued. This proactive approach ensures that all children are involved, with their feelings being placed at the centre of everything that they do.

Policies and procedures are mostly in place and are used effectively to promote positive outcomes for children. Although some contain inaccurate details, ongoing discussions with the committee ensures issues are identified and quickly acted upon in order for the setting to operate smoothly. Due to the nature of the building, staff are vigilant in order to protect the children in their care. Various safety measures are in place and include coded doors, strict collection procedures and written risk assessments for all the areas indoors. However, these have not yet been developed fully in order to assess the risks for any visits such as, the journey to and from the special school. Staff have a good understanding of how to

recognise and report signs of abuse and are confident in contacting the appropriate agencies if they are unsure. A record for noting any children who arrive with an existing injury is in place but staff are not always consistent in ensuring they keep this up to date.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff actively support children's learning and as a result, they are generally making good progress towards the early learning goals. A stimulating and interesting environment is created that frequently promotes the children's learning and independence. Areas are well planned and staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are supported and involved. Planning is simple and clearly identifies the learning intention in line with the area of development. Staff then use these to focus the activity, observing children against their previous achievements to ensure progress. However this is not always consistent and results in some goals not being successfully achieved. Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn, providing some opportunities to extend their learning through questioning and adapting resources. Observations are evaluative, with children's next steps recorded, however, some staff do not always accurately record what the children have accomplished and results in an incomplete picture of their progress. Children's files are regularly shared with parents, to inform them about their children's achievements and interests, so that learning can be supported at home. In addition, outside agencies and other providers are consulted to support and enhance the children's progress further.

Children are engaged in many interesting activities that are well-planned and well-resourced. Areas such as the role play are continually updated covering various themes that include a garden centre equipped with compost, rakes and wheelbarrows. Children make lists and phone calls, creating roles they have experienced through visits with their families. Their learning is further extended as these activities are then taken outside where they learn about growth and life cycles as they plant sunflowers and nasturtiums. Furthermore, through experimental activities they begin to understand concepts such as, weights and measures. Children investigate solids and how through melting they can become liquids, testing out their theories to see if they are correct. Children are confident in naming many shapes, colours and size. They identify which cubes are bigger and why, with good use of positional language. They negotiate their play with skill as they communicate effectively with their peers and with staff. Children understand that their names begin with a specific letter and are able to write clearly. They press the keys on the computer as they spell their names, carefully using the mouse to negotiate the text. Children are able to identify letters and numbers out of sequence, with some helping others if they use incorrect letters when writing their names. Stories are abundant and children thoroughly enjoy the way in which staff involve them in the circle time activities. They act out the expressions of the fierce lion or the cheeky monkey as they screw up their faces or hop about making noises and giggling. Opportunities for the children to understand concepts such as, the structure of a story or the sounds some words make are limited at times as some staff lack the knowledge and confidence to deliver this effectively.

Children's well-being is supported as they follow secure routines in order to keep themselves safe and healthy. Staff mostly follow consistent routines at mealtimes as children either wash their hands or use anti-bacterial gel. Packed lunches are provided by the parents but these are not particularly healthy, with many containing crisps and chocolate. Children eat fresh fruit at snack times as staff pass round cut up bananas and raisins. However, opportunities are often missed for children to promote their independence as staff either pour their drinks or put plates and cups out ready for them. Children remain hydrated as they have access to a water fountain, as well as their drinks at mealtimes with staff offering support in helping them understand why water is healthier for their bodies than sugary drinks. Furthermore, children run off steam as they race up and down, climbing over and under various equipment, balancing and negotiating their way around with skill. They understand why it is important to keep this type of activity at one end of the hall and are careful, listening to clear instructions from staff. Children are familiar with the settings rules, carefully helping each other to tidy away when the music is played. Although there is no named practitioner for behaviour, all staff monitor behaviour and are quick to act upon any incidents as they sensitively talk to children, helping them understand the consequences of their actions. This results in very well-behaved, well-mannered, happy children.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.