

Noah's Ark Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Hazel Meadows

Setting address Bures Village Hall, Nayland Road, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5BX

Telephone number 01787 227899

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Noah's Ark Nursery Group opened nearly 40 years ago. The group is managed by a voluntary committee and operates from one large room in the village hall in Bures, Suffolk. It has a wide catchment area and children attending come from both Suffolk and Essex. The building has level access and there are accessible toilets in the lobby adjacent to the main playroom. The staff make an area outside secure, to ensure outdoor play is available at every session.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Session times are from 9.00am to 12.00 noon. The group is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and there are currently 27 children on roll. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

Noah's Ark Nursery Group employs five staff, with at least three staff at every session. More than half of the staff are qualified to, or working towards, a NVQ Level 3. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA). It is registered to accept government funding for three- and four-year-olds and receives support from the Suffolk County Council Early Years Support Team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children experience a broad variety of play and learning experiences and are happy and settled at this welcoming, stimulating pre-school nursery. Children's individuality is valued and practice is inclusive. Staff are committed and enthusiastic and work co-operatively to care for the children, support their play and enhance their learning. Positive and trusting partnerships are established with parents and carers, ensuring children receive consistent support with their care, development and learning. Comprehensive documentation and procedures are in place to promote children's welfare and mostly work well in practice. Staff have established an effective clear method of monitoring children's individual progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Ongoing reflection, and the positive approach of the staff and management, promotes improvement and good quality and encourages continuous development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the safety of the children by ensuring premises are kept secure at all times and maintain a record of visitors
- ensure parents have regular opportunities to see and contribute to their child's learning journey

- develop further the outside area and increase the availability and variety of Information and Communication Technology
- review, update and organise policies and procedures as required.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are watchful of the children and attentive to their safety. There are effective procedures for emergency evacuation in place, which is regularly practised. Risk assessments are undertaken for the premises, the equipment and for outings, to minimise risks to children and premises are usually kept secure. Robust procedures are in place to ensure staff's suitability to work with children and all staff have attended safeguarding children training. Two staff, including the designated safeguarding officer, have attended additional training to ensure any concerns are dealt with effectively. All staff have a secure awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues and are clear of their responsibilities to protect children. The group has a thorough written policy, plus local safeguarding contact details to refer to should they have concerns about a child.

Staff are experienced and work effectively together to ensure the smooth running of the group. All required training is up to date and staff development is actively encouraged and annual appraisals are completed. Regular, informal staff meetings enable all staff to be involved in the group's development. Reflection of practice is ongoing, which promotes continuous improvement and the staff are exploring a more systematic method of self-evaluation. The group has a positive attitude and approach towards diversity and promotes good inclusive practice. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. They work closely with parents, liaising with other childcare or health professionals if required, to try to ensure each child receives appropriate support at an early stage. Their positive approach is further reflected in the resources and activities available. Comprehensive details are obtained about each child to support their welfare and signed, written consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. All records are securely kept and accurately maintained. Comprehensive written policies are in place and are currently being reviewed and reorganised.

Staff establish trusting partnerships with parents which promotes children's welfare and continuity of care. Comments received from parents during the inspection are positive. They find staff friendly and approachable and state their children are happy and settled. They receive regular verbal feedback about their child but would welcome more regular opportunities to review their child's development records. Parents are kept well informed of general information through frequent discussions with the staff, notice boards in the lobby area and newsletters. Parents become actively involved in the playgroup life as they take on roles within the management committee. The pre-school has established links with local schools that children are due to attend, to promote a smooth transition for the children into nursery or full-time school. The group receives support, from the local authority advisory staff and other professionals who support children with additional needs as required.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children have access to a wealth of activities and play and learning experiences covering all the areas of learning at each session. Staff have a very good understanding of the EYFS and the importance of children learning through play and first hand experiences. They work hard to provide a varied selection of activities, which offer children a broad range of interest and ongoing challenge. Children have time to explore and investigate at their own pace, as the resources are available for the whole session. The rolling snack enables children to continue with, or complete, their chosen activity if they wish to. For example, children delighted in mixing mud and water for some considerable time and chose to carry on with their game even when they knew snack was available. Staff enjoy their work which has a positive impact on the children and creates a fun and welcoming atmosphere. Interaction between staff and children is warm, fun and spontaneous. They are skilled to know when to support children and when to step back and let children discover for themselves. The calm and relaxed environment helps children to settle well and is conducive to their learning and concentration. Consequently, most children make excellent progress through the EYFS and are making significant gains in their learning.

Children's behaviour is very good as they are well occupied and understand the reasonable boundaries. At whole group times the children are very attentive and fully engage with the adults. They delight in the expressively told stories which foster their appreciation of books. Staff use creative methods to enhance story telling, such as puppets and story sacks containing props, to help bring stories to life and to enable children to tell their own stories. Children begin to recognise their names as they self-register and find their name card prior to having snack. They have regular opportunities to write for a purpose in their play, such as using note pads to write lists in the imaginative play area, which is set up as a market stall with fruit and vegetables. Children's numeracy is supported with pictures of fruit and the prices showing numbers as labels. Staff enter into children's role play at the market stall to naturally promote discussion about different fruits and vegetables, as well as numbers, amounts, weights and prices. Opportunities are utilised through the session, to enable children to count and make comparisons, and children have some access to technology such as mobile phones and cash tills, although this is an area for further development.

Children have regular opportunities to explore a broad variety of media and textures, such as play dough, sand and paint and thoroughly enjoy painting with marbles. Children's efforts are praised and encouraged and many examples of the children's artwork are displayed around the playroom, helping them to feel valued. Spontaneous opportunities are utilised well and sometimes reflect the seasons. For example, ice found outside was brought indoors for the children to explore. This was further developed by freezing toy animals in ice to promote interest and discussion with the children as they chipped away at the ice with spoons and making discoveries as it melted. They begin to learn more about the community around them through topics and books plus occasional visits to the local area, for

example, walking across the adjacent playing field to the river or to see the sheep. Children become aware of people who can keep them safe, such as the community police officer who regularly visits the group. Children's additional needs are sensitively supported by staff. For example, hospital props and toys are introduced to all and subtly provide familiarity and reassurance for children who are due to go into hospital.

Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise and are offered periods to freely go outside or stay indoors. The immediate outdoor area is quite small but staff introduce a variety of activities to try to fully utilise the outdoor area, such as planting flowers and vegetables, and this is an area for ongoing development. Children begin to master skills of balance and coordination as they play with balls and stilts outside, and indoors they use tools such as scissors with increasing competence. Children understand the importance of good hygiene and independently wash their hands prior to snack or after messy activities. Snack options are healthy and plentiful, consisting of a variety of fruit plus toast. Children's independence is encouraged as they spread their own toast and pour their own drinks. Children's personal hygiene needs are well met. Nappy changing is discreet and safe, and children's privacy and dignity is respected, as they are changed in a designated area within the main playroom.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 1 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 2 |

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