

Noah's Ark Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique reference number | EY371691 |
| Inspection date | 20/11/2009 |
| Inspector | Andrea Ewer |
| Setting address | St Lukes Primary School, St Crispins Drive, NORTHAMPTON, NN5 4BL |
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| Email | |
| Type of setting | Childcare on non-domestic premises |

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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*.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Noah's Ark Playgroup opened in 1990 and is run by a committee. It is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 24 children from two years up to five-years-old. The playgroup operates from a classroom in St Luke's Primary School in the Upton area of Northampton and has use of the school hall and computer room. Children have access to the school playground for outdoor play.

There are currently 63 children on roll, a number of whom receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children who have special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language. It is open from 8.45am until 11.45am with a lunch club from 11.45am until 12.30pm and afternoon sessions from 12.45pm until 3.45pm during term time.

A total of nine staff work directly with the children. Of these, seven staff, including the manager, hold an early years qualification. Three volunteers regularly work at the playgroup. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and obtained a Level 2 'Aiming for Quality' Quality Assurance Accreditation.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Noah's Ark Playgroup provides a warm, friendly and inclusive environment where children feel valued as individuals and contributes very well to children feeling a strong sense of belonging in the playgroup. Children make good progress in their learning and development as staff work well together to provide a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities based on their interests and abilities. Partnerships with parents and others are used effectively to promote children's welfare which fully supports a continuous approach to the care and learning. The playgroup is starting to use self-reflection to evaluate the playgroup and identify their strengths and priorities for development in order to improve outcomes for children and demonstrate a capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop children's understanding of the differences in people's lives and beliefs through increasing resources to support this learning
- develop the two-way flow of information with parents with regard to the sharing of information about activities children have been involved in each day
- develop the use of the outdoor area to further enhance children's play and learning opportunities
- develop the use of self-evaluation further to clearly identify strengths and

priorities for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective safeguarding procedures fully protect children from harm or neglect. Clear vetting procedures are in place that ensure staff are suitable to have regular contact with children and include Criminal Records Bureau checks. Staff are confident in their knowledge of safeguarding procedures and their role in protecting children. The written safeguarding procedure takes account of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and includes the procedure to follow if allegations are made against a member of staff. Overall, effective measures are in place to eliminate potential hazards and keep children safe. The written risk assessment supports the visual checks carried out daily and effective measures are in place to reduce the risk of accidents. For example, a safety gate prevents children leaving the play area and an entry to the playgroup is closely monitored by the receptionist at the entrance to the school. Staff are well deployed and ensure children are properly supervised at all times and unknown visitors are asked to show proof of identification.

Overall, effective measures are in place to monitor and evaluate the playgroup. Children benefit from the established and well-qualified staff who work well as a team and are effectively supported by the management committee who have a clear aim of providing good quality care and education. The recently introduced staff appraisals and regular meetings contribute to the smooth running of the playgroup and ensures a consistent approach to children's welfare, learning and development. For example, they are currently working towards improving the already good qualification levels. They have achieved the Level 2 'Aiming for Quality' accreditation and the playgroup receives support from a local authority advisory teacher. They have started to make use of the Ofsted self-evaluation form to record their strengths and priorities for improvement. They do not yet have a complete record of the self-evaluation to support them to reflect on their accomplishments so far and are currently looking at ways of involving staff more meaningfully in evaluating what is being done well and areas to be developed.

Overall, partnerships with parents is a key strength in the playgroup. Staff work hard to develop close relationships with parents and actively seek their views through regular discussions about children and the comments box. Parents attend regular meetings where information is shared about children's development and they develop their understanding of what children learn from the activities provided during stay and play sessions. The occasional 'homework' given to children further involves parents in their learning. This shows that staff encourage parents to become fully involved in their children's learning and gain a good understanding of what and how they learn through play. Parents say they are very happy with the progress their children are making at the playgroup. They say children really enjoy the range of activities provided and that their children are treated as individuals. Some parents feel they do not always get enough information about how their children have spent their time in the playgroup on a daily basis. The playgroup has close links with the school. Children have their

packed lunch with reception class which helps to prepare them for the school environment and routines and at times the playgroup join the reception class for specific activities. In the main, the playgroup actively promotes equality of opportunity and works effectively with parents and other agencies to support and meet children's individual needs. Staff obtain useful information about children's starting points and capabilities and use their observations and assessments to support children to achieve their potential. Activities are equally accessible to all children including boys and girls and may at times be adapted to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development and thoroughly enjoy their time in the playgroup. They share friendly relationships with consistent, motivated staff who support their learning well. Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and implement it confidently to promote children's learning. They plan a stimulating and interesting range of activities based on what they know about children to support them to build on skills they already have. For example, they focus on specific activities and areas of development for children who do not attend regularly to ensure they are not disadvantaged. Sensitive observations are carried out regularly on all children and show their progress towards the early learning goals. The next steps are clearly identified and the information is used to inform good quality planning for individual children which effectively supports them to make good progress as they learn through their play. Children develop a positive attitude to learning as they purposefully engage in activities of their choice. They start to make sense of the world as they actively engage in role play where they cook the dinner, put the washing in the machine, do the ironing and look after the babies. Children's access to resources that help them understand diversity and the culture and beliefs of others are limited. They have great fun dressing-up as their favourite character as a practise for the school fete which gives them a sense of belonging within the playgroup and wider community. Problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy is a key strength in the playgroup. Numbers are attractively displayed around the room and staff talk to children about numbers and shapes and count as part of daily activities. Children count spontaneously and confidently, such as how many pieces of pizza they have on the plate during role play. They count regularly as they operate simple programmes on the computer and understand they must not build the large bricks higher than five blocks high. Children are starting to link letters to sounds and understand that print carries meaning. Many of them recognise the starting letter of their name and listen carefully to stories where they talk about the pictures, answer questions and comment on aspects of the story they relate to. Children have many opportunities for mark-making and start to understand that print carries meaning. They freely access mark-making materials where they independently cut lengths of sticky tape, cut shapes out of the paper and make marks using stampers and pencil crayons. They paint at the easel and create pictures using finger paints and some children write their own name on their pictures. This contributes well to children developing early writing skills. Although children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills they do not always

have access to the outdoor area to further extend their play and learning.

Space, furniture and equipment are well organised overall and create a welcoming and fully enabling environment where children move around freely. The many colourful displays of children's artwork, photographs and posters gives them a strong sense of belonging. The outdoor area is not yet used fully to extend children's learning and development during outdoor play. Effective measures are in place to minimise potential hazards and reduce the risk of accidents. The premises are secure, safety gates ensure children are unable to leave their designated area unsupervised and they are always supervised to visit the toilet. Fire safety equipment is in place and regular emergency evacuation practices ensure children are familiar with what to do in the event of a fire. Children's good health is promoted well. They enjoy nutritious snacks that contribute to their healthy growth and development, and help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout sessions. They develop simple good hygiene practices as part of daily routines, such as washing their hands at appropriate times and disposing of used tissues in the bin which helps to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Records that support staff to maintain children's good health include details of their special dietary requirements and medical conditions, written consent to seek emergency medical treatment or advice, accident and medicine records.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 2 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met