



## **Noah's Ark Pre-school**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	507947
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Lilyanne Taylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	Forton Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 3JN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Noah's Ark Pre-school
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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*

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## 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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark pre-school has been registered since 1988. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers and has charitable status. The pre-school operates from the hall of St John's Church Gosport. There is an enclosed area for outside play. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 12.00 during term time only. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 28 children on roll. Of these 20 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports

children with special needs. The committee employs 5 staff to work with the children. All staff hold a relevant National Vocational Qualification in early years. The pre-school achieved the Pre-school Learning Alliance Aiming for Quality accreditation in 2005 and receives support visits from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Most health and hygiene procedures and practices in place promote the good health of children. All surfaces are wiped using anti-bacterial sprays and appropriate procedures are in place for changing nappies. Children learn to follow personal hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash their hands appropriately throughout a session. However, they are not fully protected from the spread of infection with the practices in place for hand drying; only one hand towel is available for children to use if they choose not to use the hot air dryer. Staff are fully aware of the systems to record all accidents and the administration of medication, helping to keep the children healthy and ensure all parents are well informed. Parents sign all records to acknowledge the entries and give written consent prior to medication being administered. Children are protected because all staff are first aid trained and permission is sought for the seeking of emergency advice or treatment for each child on entry to the pre-school. This ensures children will receive immediate treatment in the event of an accident.

Children benefit from a varied and healthy selection of nutritious snacks and drinks. They have fresh fruit, vegetables or cheese and crackers and the choice of milk or water to drink. Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure all dietary requirements are met and understood. Children are able to freely access drinking water throughout a session which ensures they do not go thirsty. Children have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills through a range of physical outdoor activities. They develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and benefit from outside play daily. Children demonstrate how well they can keep their balance by using their arms outstretched when stepping from one upturned washing up bowl to another and when walking along a log. They skilfully climb a tree stump, placing their feet appropriately on the sawn off branch stumps to reach the top then, under close supervision they use both feet together to jump off and land on the ground carefully, placing their hands in front of them to keep their balance. Children are taken on walks around the local area and visit the local play park on a regular basis where they have use of a climbing frame, slide and swing.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Photographs of all members of staff are displayed in the foyer and displays of children's work adorn

the walls of the hall. Staff are vigilant and very alert in ensuring the premises are kept secure so children are kept safe. The entrance door to the hall is kept locked and entry can only be gained after a member of staff lets visitors in. All visitors are required to sign in and out of the premises and to record the reason for their visit. All visitors are shadowed by a member of staff which ensures children are not left alone with persons who have not been vetted. Systems in place ensure children's safe arrival and collection; parents are required to escort them into the premises on arrival and they are only allowed to be collected by persons their parents have authorised. Records of children and staff's attendance are maintained to show who is present at any one time. Staff assess the potential risks to children and most procedures and practices in place minimise these. All areas of the premises both indoors and out are checked prior to opening to ensure they are free from hazards and safe for children's use. A walking rope is used when transferring children from the hall to the rear outdoor play area. Children are aware of their own safety and are keen to tell people that they have to hold onto the rope because there is a busy road and a lot of traffic which is dangerous. All equipment and toys are checked to ensure they are in a good condition and safe for children's use. Resources are stored on low level units which means children can access them safely and independently. Gas heaters within the hall are regularly checked to ensure they are safe and most guards around them are securely fixed to the wall. Procedures for evacuating the premises in the event of an emergency are displayed and regular fire drill practices are carried out which ensures all children can exit safely. Children are kept safe on outings. Staff make pre-visits to places they take children to, to ensure they are safe, suitable and offer the necessary facilities for younger children. Parents' written permission is sought for all outings and they are provided with details of the place to be visited. The adult to child ratio is increased which ensures all children are closely supervised in non familiar surroundings. Staff are fully aware of the procedures they should follow in the event of a child being lost. Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection and the signs which may indicate a child is being abused. Pre-existing injuries of children are recorded and shared with parents. Procedures and policies comply with the guidance included in "what to do if your worried a child is being abused". This is shared with parents which ensures children's welfare is well protected.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly on arrival as they are met at the door by staff. Children are encouraged to hang up their coats increasing their independence while staff and parents ensure younger children are assisted as necessary, building their self-esteem. Staff interact with the children well, they spend time talking to the children and listen to what they have to say valuing their conversations. Children enjoy the time they spend in the setting. They have a good relationship with staff, enjoy their company and have a cuddle with them when they are upset. Children are beginning to form friendships and play happily alongside one another. They play in a well organised and relaxed environment. Although most activities are differentiated for children under three staff are aware that this is an area they need to develop to ensure all activities offer children appropriate challenges and sustain their interest.

## Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. All staff have knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This enables them to plan a well balanced programme of activities, which cover the six areas of learning. Activities are linked to the stepping stones to ensure the children's progress can be monitored and the activities are purposeful. The challenges for children are sufficient and aimed at each child's level and stage of development. Observations of children's progress are ongoing, all staff record individual achievements clearly and collate the information to inform the curriculum ensuring the needs of all children are met. Daily routines are balanced and allow opportunities for children to focus on one-to-one tasks and to take part in large and small group activities. Most activities are well organised to promote learning in all areas. However, children are not always able to listen attentively to stories or join in singing their favourite nursery rhymes when they are done with the whole group because younger children become bored and restless which disrupts the activity taking place. Staff ask children open- ended questions encouraging children to think about what they are trying to achieve. They allow the children time to think about their answers and value their responses. Children are proud of their achievements and respond well to the praise they are given.

Some parts of the session are structured; others allow children to express themselves freely. For example children express their own thoughts and ideas when painting pictures, making collages or models and when recording in their diaries what they have enjoyed doing each session.

Children's social skills are developing well. They are keen to join in activities and play well alongside one another sharing resources and learning how to take turns. Children show good levels of independence in caring for themselves and their own personal hygiene. Most older children are able to put on their coats ready for outdoor play and happily help younger children to put theirs on, with only minimal support being required from staff to do buttons or zips up. Children are beginning to recognise their own names and some words they see in the environment. Resources are labelled with pictures and written words, coat racks are named and most children are able to select their names to self register for snack time. Children enjoy looking at books; they take them outside and sit on a log to either look at them alone or have them read by a member of staff. They use their imagination well when making up their own stories using puppets. Children tell their story to a member of staff who records what they say on an A4 sheet of paper, they then draw a picture which relates to their story under the writing. Children are encouraged to label their own work and some more able children are beginning to write recognisable letters of their name. Staff introduce children to all aspects of mathematics through planned activities. For example children match the correct numeral to the number of objects they count, sort objects into sizes comparing whether they are bigger, smaller or the same and whether they have the same amount, more or less. They talk about shapes of objects and are beginning to recognise a triangle, square and circle. However, staff miss many incidental opportunities to extend children's understanding of calculation. For example when singing ten green bottles or playing skittles children are not encouraged to work out how many are left when some are taken away and when counting how many children and adults are present no comparison is made to

see whether there are more boys than girls or less adults to children. Children's awareness of the local area and curiosity of the natural environment is aroused during the time they spend outdoors. Whilst out on walks they discuss what they see. For example the various types of houses and buildings, the local shops, road signs and the places where it is safe to cross the roads. Whilst playing in the outdoor play area children thoroughly enjoy rolling a log across the ground to see what mini beasts they can discover in the bark, dig the ground to find worms and spend time looking at a badgers hole waiting to see if one appears. Children collect leaves in baskets, which they later use to make pictures and prints. Children show high levels of concentration and perseverance whilst using their hand and eye co-ordination skills to guide magnetic objects such as ball bearings and paper clips which are inside a plastic bottle to the top using a magnet on the outside.

Children are developing a sense of time through the daily routine which they are familiar with. A visual time line is displayed so all children are able to see the part of the session they are at. Children make their own play dough; learning that different medias can be combined and how the textures of ingredients change when water and oil are added. They have opportunities to use a range of re-cycled materials to make collages and models and are able to complete their work to their own specification.

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

The provision is good.

Children are settled, happy and confident; they play well together and enjoy each others company. They are familiar with the daily routine and are comfortable and at ease with staff who know them well which makes them feel secure. A welcome poster displayed in the main foyer is written in various languages and all children have equal access to the activities and equipment provided. Children with special needs are welcomed and integrated into the setting. The setting has a named member of staff who is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). She has attended training and is aware of her role and responsibilities. Good links have been established with other professionals which means children's needs are met and they receive appropriate support and help to make progress. Staff use praise and encouragement to re-enforce good behaviour. Children's behaviour is good; they share resources, take turns and show an awareness of the behavioural expectations of the setting. Children learn right from wrong through the clear guidance they receive from staff in response to their behaviour. They enjoy having responsibilities and help to pack away the toys they have been playing with and older children help younger children with tasks they find difficult. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of the needs of others; they take part in sponsored fundraising events to raise money for children's charities. They learn about the cultures of others through various resources and some festivals they celebrate. Children's social, spiritual, moral and cultural development is fostered. The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from the outstanding working relationship staff have with parents and the involvement their parents are able to have in the management and day to day organisation of the pre-school. New children settle well because of the good admission and settling in procedures offered. Staff make home visits to

meet children if their parents wish and children are invited to visit the pre-school with their parents prior to enrolling. Children are able to get to know the key worker who will be responsible for their care and education and familiarise themselves with the surroundings in which they will be cared for. Parents have the opportunity to discuss with staff any care needs their child may have and exchange information of the stage of development their child is at. This ensures the child's transition from home to pre-school is smooth and the care and education they receive is appropriate. Parents are given regular newsletters which provide information of forthcoming events, activities the children will be engaging in and any changes to staffing, committee members or the operational procedures of the setting. Parents are given a very comprehensive prospectus which details the policies and procedures the setting works to and information of the procedures they should follow if they have a complaint. Although the setting has not received any complaints from parents appropriate systems and procedures are in place for investigating, recording, reporting back and informing parents of any complaints made. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's development and learning. They have the opportunity to attend various early years courses and invited into the pre-school to attend a session with their child. Parents are given information leaflets of the learning children can gain through activities such as painting, making play dough and craft activities which they can then use to extend or continue their child's learning at home if they wish. Parents are able to discuss their child's progress informally each day and through formal meetings with their child's key worker. Records of children's progress are shared with parents. Parents are encouraged to comment on these and to share any observations of achievements or interests they notice their child has made or shown at home. This information is then used alongside the key workers observations to plan for their child's next steps in learning which ensures children's interests are built on and they are appropriately supported and helped to make progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a suitably qualified and experienced staff team. Systems in place for recruitment and induction of new staff are rigorous. Appropriate vetting procedures are carried out and evidence is seen of qualifications which ensure they are suitable to work with children. All staff have an induction period so they are fully aware of the policies and procedures the pre-school works to. Systems for ensuring the continuing suitability of staff have recently been introduced; staff are aware they have a duty to disclose to the management committee any changes in their circumstances which may affect their suitability for working with children. Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities on a daily basis ensuring they understand what is expected of them, which promotes good team work and enables each staff member to contribute fully to the running of the group. Staff work extremely well as a team and communicate through regular meetings and daily discussions to ensure the pre-school sessions run smoothly and children's care and well being is promoted. Children are supported and settle well because staff are deployed effectively. Staff make good use of space which maximises the opportunities children have to engage in a wide range of activities. Areas within the pre-school are separated with low level

storage units or partitions so children are able to move freely from one activity to another. All children benefit from good levels of supervision as high staffing ratios are maintained. Policies, procedures and most practices the pre-school work to ensure good outcomes for children are promoted. Staff are well supported by the management committee both formally and informally through daily discussions and regular meetings. Although staff regularly attend in-service training to update their knowledge of child care and child development they have little knowledge of the literature or training available to ensure children under three are provided with appropriate activities. Consequently, there are minor deficiencies in this area. Staff's performance is reviewed through fortnightly supervision meetings and yearly appraisals. All documentation is well organised and maintained as required. Staff are conscientious about maintaining confidentiality and store children's records securely.

Leadership and management is good.

The management committee of the pre-school is mainly made up of parents who have children attending. They are aware of their responsibilities and work alongside staff to ensure a good standard of care and nursery education is provided for all children. The day to day running of the pre-school is delegated to a very experienced supervisor. The pre-school has a strong commitment towards providing a learning environment where children are supported to develop. The monitoring of the quality of nursery education provided is good overall. Systems have recently been introduced to monitor and observe staff's practice; staff observe each others performance and discuss areas for improvement. However, because staff do not always recognise incidental learning opportunities and the grouping of children for some activities is not always appropriate this is having an impact on the learning and progress children are making in some areas of their development. Planned activities are fully evaluated to ensure the aims and needs of children are met; areas for improvement are noted and used to inform future activities. The pre-school is meeting the needs of the children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection the pre-school were asked to ensure the procedures for promoting health and hygiene at snack time are effective, risk assessments are completed during the sessions and the visitors' book has contact details available. Appropriate procedures have been put in place to ensure all eating surfaces are cleaned prior to snack time, however the practices used for children to wash and dry their hands prior to eating a snack do not fully protect children from the spread of infection. Risk assessments are now carried out throughout a session. Staff take appropriate action with any hazards they identify which minimises risks to children. Staff are able to verify the authenticity of visitors' because the visitors' book provides details of the person visiting and the purpose of their visit which means children are kept safe. The pre-school were also asked to ensure children are given opportunities for physical play, to ensure staff are consistent in dealing with behaviour management procedures and to improve the deployment of staff during free play session. Time for physical play is now incorporated into the planning of every session; children benefit from a wide range of activities to develop their large muscle skills during their play in the outdoor area and through outings they have to the local



park. All staff have discussed the policy and procedures the pre-school works to regarding behaviour management. Consequently, the strategies used for managing children's behaviour are now known by all staff and consistently applied. All staff are deployed effectively; they interact with the children well and during free play activities they sit alongside children and join in with their play. This means children receive the support they need and gain the most enjoyment from the activities they are engaging in.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school were asked to improve the staffs management of behaviour enabling the children to improve their behaviour and learn the consequences of their words and actions and the impact they have on others, evaluate and improve the organisation of resources, time, staff deployment and the daily routines to increase and maximise all learning opportunities, improve the planning system so that it covers all six areas of learning and clearly states the learning aims of the activity, provide interesting and stimulating activities so as to increase the children's willingness to take part and become active in their learning and maximise their learning and to evaluate the recording system of the children's assessment records to ensure consistency.

Staff have attended a managing children's behaviour course, which has enhanced their knowledge of how to effectively manage children's behaviour. Children's good behaviour is re-enforced through praise and encouragement. Negative behaviour is sensitively dealt with by staff. They explain to children the reasons why their behaviour is not acceptable and why. Consequently; children gain an understanding of what is right and wrong and how their behaviour affects others. The organisation of resources has been improved. The committee has purchased low level storage units and see through boxes; children are now able to freely make their own choice of activities and select their own play resources and materials. Some daily routines have been evaluated and revised. For example snack time is now run cafeteria style; children choose when they want their snack and often take it when they know their friends are having theirs. They hand in their name card to obtain their snack and drink and sit and chat to other children and the member of staff at the table. This has had an impact on helping and supporting children become independent and in improving their social and communication skills. However, activities such as story time and singing are not well organised. These are carried out with all the children sat in a large group. Consequently, more able children are not able to concentrate and gain the most learning and enjoyment from them because younger children lose interest and become bored and restless. The revision of how staff are deployed has helped to increase and maximise the learning opportunities for children. Most members of staff are key workers and have a group of children for whom they are responsible. A rota displayed, details the activities staff are to be deployed at each session and written plans of activities clearly show the staff's role and the intended learning they are to help children achieve. The planning system now covers all six areas of learning and clearly states the intended learning aim of the activity based on the stepping stones of the early learning goals. The recent introduction of encouraging children to chat to members of staff at the end of a session about the activities they have engaged in and what they liked or did not like is having a positive impact on the children showing a willingness to take part in activities. Staff record in the child's diary what they say and children then draw a picture of the activity. Staff

use this information to plan future activities. Consequently, children are provided with stimulating activities which build on their interests. The format staff use for recording children's progress is now consistent. Every child's progress folder consists of an individual play plan and a progress record sheet. On these staff record the observations they have made and what the aims are for the children's next steps in learning based on the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

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.

## **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 good.

### **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):

- improve the practices used for hand drying
- improve the outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with the Birth to three framework

#### **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):

- review the organisation of some large group activities to ensure all children are able to join in and gain the most learning from them
- make more use of incidental learning opportunities so children's knowledge and understanding of calculation is increased.

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