



Sarah's Ark

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294449
Inspection date	25 October 2005
Inspector	Michael, David Charnley
Setting Address	Hollands Farmhouse, Wigan Road, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 5UD
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Registered person	Sarah's Ark Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Sarah's Ark nursery has been in operation since October 2004 and is registered to provide care for 31 children from 0 to 5 years. The setting is open from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year excluding bank holidays. The setting is situated on the outskirts of Leyland in a residential area. It comprises of 6 rooms in total, 3 specifically designed for children aged under 2 years, 1 for toddlers and the remaining 2 rooms for pre-schoolers, which are located on the first floor of the

building. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area for use by all the children.

There a total of 23 children on roll aged from 0 to 5 years. Of these 2 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the immediate and wider community. The nursery supports children with special educational needs.

The nursery employs 7 staff in total. 5 members of staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting is supported by the Surestart early years teacher team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected appropriately since staff follow strong routine procedures, which in turn minimises the risk of infection and cross contamination. Consents, policies and procedures relating to accidents and medicines are effective in ensuring continuity of care between home and nursery through good communication and appropriate action. Staff lead by example and as a result children learn the importance of hand washing at appropriate times throughout the day. They have some appreciation that this practice helps to minimise the spread of germs. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own hygiene and are motivated when seeing themselves to the bathroom. This means that children develop a growing ability to be independent and an awareness of personal hygiene. Staff exercise vigilant practices in keeping the premises, toys and equipment clean. Such practices allow children to play in a clean environment without risk to their health.

Children enjoy a varied diet and look forward to their meals, which are prepared on the premises and accompanied with drinks, although these are not readily accessible throughout the day. They take great delight in sitting together at meal times, chatting freely to their peers and staff who encourage them to complete their meal as it makes them 'strong and healthy'. Whilst this good practice allows them to develop their social skills, their understanding of maintaining a healthy diet is not fostered effectively. This is because the range of fresh produce available on the menu is limited and staff only occasionally talk to children about the foods that keep them healthy. Staff gather a good source of information from parents in relation to children's likes, dislikes and any other dietary requirements. Children's individual dietary needs are, therefore sensitively catered for and met appropriately. The health of babies and toddlers is promoted well as staff follow their routines for sleep and rest.

Staff plan a suitable range of physical activities for children of varying ages and abilities that contributes to keeping them healthy. Children have fun as they move their bodies in different ways to the rhythm of the music, hence develop good co-ordination. Outdoors, children enjoy the fresh air as they scoot around on push along toys, moving in different directions and learning to adjust their speed. The

limited range of choice available, however hinders older children's ability to develop their physical skills in the wider sense such as balancing. Younger children show great delight as they develop early balancing techniques, rocking to and fro on the seesaw and clambering up and down the slide. Their fine motor skills are fostered well throughout the nursery as they use a good range of tools safely to effect changes to materials, for example, older children using trowels in the garden to dig and plant seeds.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for its purpose with the relevant safety features strategically positioned by staff, allowing for children's freedom of movement. Children move around and alternate between the different play rooms with confidence. They are sufficiently protected from hazards since staff implement risk assessments and take corrective action where necessary. Children learn to manage their own safety. This is because staff talk to them about potential hazards, such as what could happen if climbing on the furniture and the dangers of running around indoors. They are encouraged to tidy away equipment so as to minimise the risk of accidents. Children have an awareness of what to do in the event of fire in line with the nursery's procedure, however this is not practised at the frequency recommended. Good security measures that involves keeping the main exits locked and staff monitoring access contributes to keeping children protected on the premises.

Children are able to play, eat and rest in an environment that is welcoming and generally stimulating to the eye. This is as a result of staff's attention to making the premises child centred. Children benefit from the use of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate equipment and resources that are checked by staff periodically and set out according to their respective ages and abilities. Equipment is rotated and organised in order to enable children to select resources independently, however, the range available doesn't support them in all areas of their learning and are not always easily accessible. This hinders the degree of choice children are able to make.

The welfare and protection of the children is safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding of potential signs of abuse and neglect; also of whom to report to in the event of identifying a child protection concern. The setting's written statement covers all the required elements including the relevant contact details. This statement is known to staff and contributes to the safe and efficient management of the provision as a whole.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children in the nursery enjoy a varied range of activities that helps them achieve according to different aspects of their learning. The ability to express

themselves creatively is fostered appropriately with children accessing a good range of media and materials that include paint, play dough, sand and water. They paint and produce pictures in various forms using a good range of mark making materials, thus enabling them to create their own patterns and designs. Musical activities and story times are incorporated into the daily routine with children developing early communication skills, such as the ability to listen and respond to the spoken word. They learn to move their bodies to the rhythm of the beat as staff engage them in sing along sessions. Heuristic play in the form of 'treasure baskets' enables young children to explore their senses. Children are encouraged to make choices and decisions about their play, hence develop their independence. They enjoy the ability to play at floor level and explore their surroundings. Children experiment with interest taking great delight in discovering how things work and developing simple problem solving skills as they play with shape sorters, push and pull toys. The limited range of resources available, however, restricts children's ability to make choices and explore other avenues in their play.

Young children benefit from routines, which are consistent with their experiences at home. Staff make routine activities, such as nappy changing personal by talking to them about what they are doing, thus promoting their understanding of linking words with actions. Young children receive good levels of care in the form of cuddles, smiles and gentle tones from the attentive staff, hence strong bonds are formed which increases their sense of well being. Children are happy and content in the presence of staff who play at floor level and encourage them to develop new skills, such as the ability to reach out for toys from the sitting position, standing with support and progressing to walking stage. Young children learn basic social skills as they enjoy being in the company of adults and other children. They play very contently at floor level laughing along with the friendly natured staff who sit with them, give good eye contact and encourage them to express their feelings. Although implementation is in its early stages staff make reference to the birth to three matters framework in observing and assessing individual children, thus ensuring that they make progress according to the different areas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Children have a positive attitude to learning and are willing participants as they engage with interest in the practical and routine activities of the day. This is mainly contributory to staff's good commitment in planning a varied curriculum which cover most aspects of children's learning. Staff's growing knowledge of the Foundation Stage means that they are able to implement the plans in place and adopt appropriate teaching strategies to promote children's learning. This includes the delivery of 'focussed' activities that centre around specific aspects of learning. Levels of challenge, however are at times insufficient for children in that staff do not stretch their thinking ability and incorporate other aspects of their learning, namely mathematical and language development, thus resulting in deficits in children's learning. Whilst children develop simple counting skills and learn about mathematical concepts during their play, for example, weighing and measuring the ingredients during baking activity the ability for children to problem solve is an area that is not effectively promoted. Children are confident communicators and good listeners. They enjoy story sessions and 'news times' where they speak and share events that have happened to them in their home life. Children are beginning to learn

that print carries meaning as they choose books from the shelf and handle them correctly. Whilst children are able to recognise their name cards at registration time their understanding of letter sounds is limited. The ability to express themselves creatively and represent their ideas is fostered well. Children enjoy working on a small or larger scale, for example, producing fish tanks with the support of staff, singing with gusto songs familiar to them and using their imagination well as they play the role of 'customer' and 'waiter' in the café.

Good attention is paid to monitoring the progress of individual children, however the assessments and the use of information gained from it is sometimes inconsistent in that the future learning steps are not specified and linked to the plans. Although children confidently self select and access resources to support their play the range of choice available is lacking in certain aspects that in turn affects their progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical and physical development. There are very few resources available to support children's understanding of information technology and balancing equipment to develop their physical skills. Visual aids to support children's understanding of number are limited.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the setting. They are sufficiently confident and assured to work and play independently or in groups. The behaviour of the children is good enough to enable learning to take place. They have a developing awareness of the need for rules and learn to take responsibility for their actions with adult support. Overall children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals given their capabilities and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to make a positive contribution because they are made to feel welcome and valued. Staff have a sound awareness of equal opportunities, which is reflected in the way they plan for children and their individual development. Their appreciation and understanding of the wider world is fostered well through the availability of resources that include books, jigsaws and small world. Children engage in themed activities that helps develop their awareness of cultural traditions and festivals. As part of the Chinese new year they sample food, which they eat with chopsticks and make Chinese dragons for display. Charity based activities, such as 'help the local child' means that children develop positive attitudes towards people who are less fortunate than themselves. There is regard to the special needs 'code of practice' with staff taking appropriate steps to promote children's welfare and development. This involves close liaison with outside agencies in partnership with parents.

Staff are good role models who treat children individually and with respect. Children learn the boundaries and respond well to the praise and encouragement offered by the staff resulting in raised levels of self esteem and confidence. They show an eagerness to help tidy away toys and are courteous to others during their play. Good manners are learnt with children being polite during snack and meal times. They are generally well behaved. Their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is thus

fostered appropriately.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Positive relationships with parents are formed from the onset. The good settling in procedures helps children make the transition from home to nursery. Relevant information about the policies and procedures are readily made available although they are not given sufficient information about the programme for nursery education which hinders their ability to support their child's learning at home. Parents are able to approach staff at any time with an established key worker system in place. Such links helps the smooth flow of information with children's needs being at the heart of any discussions. Parents indicate that they are satisfied with the service. Staff receive numerous thank you cards and words of appreciation.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff plan a structured day that enables children to engage in free play and adult directed activity. Children are familiar with the routine day to day activities and in the main find the activities interesting. Staff generally manage their time well dedicating attention to individual children, however the organisation and accessibility to resources is sometimes ineffective and hinders children's ability to make choices.

Areas of record keeping are well organised, up to date and stored in confidence. Staff have a sound awareness of the nursery's policies and procedures which contributes to the safe management of the provision. They undertake their respective duties appropriately, communicating with each other on a daily basis and attending team meetings. Such practices serve to promote and protect children's welfare.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The manager leads with enthusiasm and commitment and staff speak positively of the support offered by the management team. Training is made available to staff as part of the recently established induction and appraisal systems in place. Staff have to date not attended training in relation to the Foundation Stage and Birth to three matters framework although it is scheduled as part of the nursery's action plan. There is a positive attitude towards improving and developing the educational provision. Established links have been formed with the early years teacher team. This involves reviewing existing planning and assessment systems as a means of ensuring children receive a varied education programme and their progress is monitored. The setting, however, has to date not set up a rigorous system for reviewing and monitoring existing practices resulting in some deficits in children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- improve upon the range of nutritious foods offered to children and promote further their understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle
- make accessible to children a wider range of play materials and resources in order to support their learning and allow for a greater degree of choice
- make readily available to parents information about the early learning goals and the programme plans, involve them where possible in their children's learning

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 planning and assessment procedures making sure that staff use effective teaching strategies to extend children's learning and use the information gained from their observations to effectively plan what children need to learn next
- develop children's ability to problem solve as part of practical and normal routine day to day activity, display visual aids to support their understanding of number.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk