

Noah's Ark Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

205332

Inspection date

07/06/2010

Inspector

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Setting address

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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 Nursery opened in 1996 and is a committee-run community group that is linked to a local church. It operates from five rooms within Matchborough Church Centre, in a residential area of Redditch, close to local schools and shops. Children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.15am to 4.30pm during term time only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 62 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification Level 2. One member of staff is a qualified teacher and two are working towards a degree. In addition, three support staff are employed, along with a part-time sports teacher. The setting provides funded early education to three and four-year-olds and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points, capabilities and interests. A wealth of exciting and challenging learning opportunities are offered so that all children can equally experience the challenge of problem solving, making decisions and thinking critically within a unique, rich, learning environment. Outcomes for children are significantly enhanced by staff's excellent knowledge and understanding of how to nurture and meet each child's needs and staff are highly successful in supporting both children and their families. The nursery leaders are enthusiastic and have consistently high aspirations for all children. Strong organisation, leadership and management, and rigorous self-evaluation are key strengths within the nursery and are used very successfully to secure the best outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reviewing the system for recording parents' contributions and use these more effectively so that children's records clearly recognise and value parents' observations of their child's progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a comprehensive awareness of how to protect children, receive regular training on safeguarding and work proactively and effectively with both parents and other agencies when necessary. Protocols and practice for making referrals and sharing relevant information are comprehensive and this ensures staff work closely with all local outside agencies to ensure that they have detailed information to protect all children in their care. Employment and checking procedures are extremely thorough and risk assessments and safety checks are maintained to the highest level. Strong organisation, leadership and management, and rigorous self-evaluation are key strengths within the nursery. Those in charge have an extremely positive 'can do' attitude which inspires and gives confidence to all those working in the nursery. The setting is led by two well-qualified managers who are in charge of the day-to-day operation and effectively steer and monitor the nursery. They are a strong driving force, who often attend local children's partnership meetings and are involved in consultations on good practice. The nursery has an excellent staffing team who benefit from high levels of training, work shadowing and mentoring. There is a sharp focus on improving standards and very good quality assurance systems which ensure that future plans for children are effective and sustainable.

Staff show an exceptional commitment to treating children as unique individuals and meeting all their needs. They develop close relationships with children's families and strong links with the community and professionals from a range of different agencies. This ensures they are able to play their part in ensuring that children receive well-coordinated support, both during their time in the setting and when moving on to school. One to one support and small group work ensures children with additional needs make excellent progress and careful planning of resources ensures learning activities are open and accessible to all children. The nursery's Special Educational Needs Coordinator is highly confident and fully trained and drives improvement by cascading information to all staff, modelling good practice and helping to design special programmes to support individual children. These arrangements are being further enhanced by plans to implement the use of a common assessment and planning framework that will ensure the nursery will have even greater facilities for sharing information and multi-agency working.

A very strong sense of belonging is developed within the nursery and this is evident from the high levels of involvement from parents, children and the local community. Parents are enthusiastic and highly complementary about the nursery and highlight the positive impact it has on their children's lives. They share information about their children through such things as a 'You are special' sheet and are fully welcomed into the setting. Staff work hard to involve parents in their child's learning and development. For example, key workers share children's achievements during daily discussions and provide annual written reports. However, although there is a clear system for noting the observations or comments made by parents about their children's progress, this information is not always used effectively as part of the ongoing assessment process.

Parent workshops and special events, such as, 'Dads and Lads' days encourage parents to learn alongside their children. People, such as, the local police officer, pensioners and children's grandparents, often visit the nursery to tell stories, play with the children or share their skills in music, woodwork and cooking. These further enrich children's experiences and ensure that they have lots of positive role models. All policies are developed, monitored and evaluated through an excellent level of involvement from staff, parents and children. They clearly set out how children will be cared for and ensure parents are kept well informed at all times.

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

Children make excellent progress, irrespective of their starting points. They show great curiosity, want to explore new things and are inquisitive. Children show exceptional levels of confidence and self-esteem and willingly help with simple tasks, such as, taking messages to staff or helping to take the register. They thrive on praise and encouragement and this is a key aspect of their successful learning. There is a high emphasis placed on using the outdoor environment to promote children's learning, and using wheelbarrows, hammers and exploring with natural materials are all part of children's everyday experiences. Staff are extremely skilled in knowing how to unlock children's potential. They give children opportunities to develop trust and autonomy, embrace new challenges, take risks and act with initiative. Steps taken to develop children's communication skills are highly commendable and include the use of signs, gestures and words in different languages. These are used particularly well to support children who have not yet developed their language skills or those who speak another language at home. Outstanding observation and approaches to planning are extremely flexible. For example, the children are regularly involved in making decisions about what they want to do and in planning their own future learning experiences.

Children are independent, recognise their own achievements and are enthusiastic about all aspects of their learning. They arrive eagerly, place their lunch boxes in the dining room, hang up their own coats and enthusiastically join in with planning what they will do that day. There is a strong focus on developing children's social, communication and language skills and circle time and small group work is used to best effect in helping children to learn to talk in turns and listen carefully to each other. For example, they put their hands up when they want to speak, sit and listen attentively and are quick to share what they know. Four-year-olds are confident in using numbers, language and computers and are carefully prepared for their transition into full-time education by highly supportive staff who understand and share children's strengths with local schools. For example, special friendship groups are arranged for those children who will be moving on to full-time education together, so that they can get to know each other well and talk about what school will be like. Children gain enormous satisfaction in learning and practising a wealth of new skills, such as, hammering in nails or building bridges from planks of wood. They dig, plant and tend plants and vegetables, learn to move and barrow tree bark from one place to another and often show exceptional skill and creativity as they play and learn. Outside learning areas are quite exceptional and provide the right conditions for fully supporting the different

learning styles and fascinations of both boys and girls.

Exceptional outcomes are achieved for children due to the wide ranging steps taken to ensure they have a healthy lifestyle, know how to keep themselves safe and learn to care for each other and their environment. Children show an excellent understanding of how they should behave and what they need to do in order to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they know that they must stand on the left to go down the stairs and on the right to come up them, and are quick to point out the mistake if someone breaks this safety rule. A rich range of learning experiences help them to learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle. For example, they enjoy a selection of healthy snacks, see colourful posters that remind them about the importance of eating five fresh fruit and vegetables a day and help to grow tomatoes and beans in the nursery garden. Children sit with their friends to enjoy stimulating meal times, learning to cope with the cartons and packaging from their packed lunches and to recycle these by placing them in the right bins.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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