



Noah's Ark Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	145998
Inspection date	24 January 2006
Inspector	Nikki Whinton
Setting Address	Downlands Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5EF
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Registered person	Noah`s Ark Nursery School Committee
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 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 Nursery School opened in 1998. It operates from a mobile room sited in the grounds of Wansdyke Primary School. A maximum of 20 children may attend the setting at any one time. The group is open Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 15.15. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15. Children may attend a supervised lunch from 11.45 to 12.45. The setting has a small outdoor area and is able to use the school playground for outdoor play. It serves the local area.

There are currently 51 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 36 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group has experience of caring for children with special needs.

The setting employs five staff. All of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications. In addition one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop their understanding of healthy eating through the nutritious snacks they enjoy whilst in the setting. Allergies and preferences are discussed with parents prior to a child commencing in the nursery, recorded and accommodated. However, children are not able to freely help themselves to drinks and snack foods are offered in limited quantity. As a result, children's varying needs may not be met.

Children learn good hygiene routines whilst in the group. For example, they are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and after toileting. They benefit from staff having a good knowledge of first aid and acting as good role models. For example, children are learning to put their hands in front of their mouths when they cough and to hygienically dispose of tissues. All required documentation is in place to support children's good health and welfare should accidents occur or children require medication.

Children lead a healthy lifestyle whilst in the nursery. They have daily opportunities for exercise and fresh air during planned outdoor play within the group's garden as well as the school grounds. Children move freely, confidently and with pleasure, demonstrating good spatial awareness. They access suitable, age appropriate equipment, such as climbing frames and peddle vehicles, to support the development of their large muscle skills. Children improve their fine muscle coordination and control through the safe handling of tools and materials including the computer mouse, gardening trowels and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and relax within an environment that is clean and appropriately maintained. They benefit from staff having a good understanding of safety issues. For example, staff are very effectively deployed to promote children's safety, hazardous substances are inaccessible to children and the premises are kept secure. All required permissions are in place, for example, for outings, to help ensure children are well protected. Children are learning to share responsibility for their safety through practical activities such as tidying away resources and taking part in fire drills. However, a storage unit within the playroom is not securely fastened to the wall and poses a risk to children's safety.

Children use a varied range of easily accessible, clean, well maintained, age appropriate equipment. They benefit from staff's knowledge of safety issues regarding the purchase and maintenance of resources. As a result, children play with toys that are safe and suitable.

Children's welfare is supported by staff that have a very secure understanding of child protection issues. There are appropriate arrangements in place for advising parents of the provider's responsibilities. Children's well-being is actively promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children within the Foundation Stage enter the provision willingly and separate easily from their main carer. They are well motivated to learn, quickly make themselves at home and start to make decisions for themselves regarding the activities they wish to explore. Children demonstrate good self-control and are able to sit quietly and concentrate for short periods, such as when listening to a story. The children have good social skills, are able to share resources and patiently wait their turn, for example, during snack time. Children develop their self-care skills through practical activities such as self-toileting and putting on their coats for outside play. Children appear relaxed, at ease and with a sense of belonging. They have good self-esteem and are learning to speak confidently in a familiar group, such as during circle time.

Two-year-olds attend separate sessions. Activities are planned using the Birth to Three's framework and written observations are undertaken on the children to support staff in promoting their development. Very good support is offered to new and younger children to help them settle. They benefit from the individual care and attention they experience whilst in the setting. They are listened to and valued, thus increasing their confidence to learn new skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They plan and provide a varied programme of interesting, practical activities to support children's learning towards the early learning goals. They act as very good role models, know the children well and have a good relationship with them. Staff give children the time they need to complete activities to their own satisfaction. They ask good indirect questions to make children think, reinforce and extend their learning. They undertake regular written observations of the children, which they use to complete assessments following the Wiltshire Building Blocks framework. Whilst some activities are planned to support children's individual progression, this is not occurring consistently. As a result, some children are not always challenged and learning potential is not fully maximised.

Children have a good range of vocabulary. They use speech with increasing confidence when talking to peers and adults. Children are learning basic sign language and are actively encouraged to develop their skills as part of the daily routine. Children learn to recognise familiar words in print through practical activities, for example, by finding their name at meal times or hanging their coats on labelled

coat pegs. They are gaining an awareness of letter sounds and are actively encouraged to develop their early writing through practical activities. Children count with increasing confidence, such as when counting peers present at the snack table or the number of bricks in a tower. They learn about shape, space and measure through opportunities, including measuring sunflowers, exploring sand and water play. However, activities involving calculation offer limited challenge, with children having few chances to extend their problem solving skills.

Children enjoy varied, stimulating opportunities to learn more about the local community. For example, they take part in outings to the library, have visited Drew's pond to plant trees and explored the Life Education Centre. In addition, they have planted sunflowers, sown seeds and built a 'wormery' to help increase their understanding of the natural world. Children are developing their awareness of time and have the chance to increase their understanding of information and communication technology as part of the daily routine. They confidently sing simple songs from memory and enthusiastically play musical instruments to accompany their singing. Children use their imagination well, such as when putting on a puppet show or investigating a small world circus. However, whilst children have the chance, to explore media and materials, some art and craft activities are adult directed, with limited opportunities for them to initiate or develop their own creative ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and acknowledged as individuals. They benefit from staff knowing them well and having a good understanding of their home circumstances. Children access a varied range of resources, including dressing up clothes, books and small world toys to help increase their awareness of diversity. Children with special educational needs are extremely well supported, receiving high quality care to help promote their development.

Children behave well. They benefit from the staff's good role modelling and their skilful use of praise and encouragement to support their positive behaviour. Children effectively learn how to relate to each other, whilst developing their understanding of right and wrong.

Children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident, independent and have good self-esteem. They are developing their self-care skills and enjoy sharing news about their home lives. They increase their understanding of a range of cultures through practical activities, such as making rangoli patterns, food tasting and taking part in a 'chopstick challenge'. Children welcome meaningful visitors to the setting, such as the dental nurse and a librarian, to increase their understanding of the wider world.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the open and warm welcome that families receive. Parents are provided with information about the provision and early years curriculum prior to their child commencing in the setting. There are informal, daily opportunities to discuss care issues and planned parents' evenings to review children's educational achievements. In addition, parents are kept

up to date with information through newsletters and parents' notice boards. They receive regular written reports on their child's academic progress and are encouraged to add their own comments and observations. Whilst parents are invited to become involved in their child's learning whilst in the setting, they are not encouraged to further develop children's awareness through practical activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is supported by staff that are well qualified, enthusiastic and well-motivated. There is an effective operational plan in place, which helps to ensure sessions run smoothly and children become settled in their care routines. There are appropriate procedures for recording the attendance of children and visitors. However, the daily arrival and departure times of staff are not recorded. All legally required documentation to support children's health and safety is carefully maintained and securely stored.

The leadership and management is good. The group benefits from the skills, experience and commitment of the playleader. The staff work very well as a team. The staff liaise effectively with the committee and meet regularly to discuss any care issues and plan the educational provision. There is a good partnership with the on-site primary school, which helps to support children's transition into the reception class. The committee and staff work well together to help support the development of the provision. There is a good understanding of the group's strengths and areas for development. Strategies are being put in place to further improve the quality of care and education offered to the children.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspections, the group were given recommendations and key issues to help develop the quality of the care and education provided.

Following the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure electrical appliances are regularly tested, playroom shelving does not pose a hazard to children, the medication book is countersigned by parents, there are procedures in place for the safe conduct of any outings and that the attendance times of children, staff and visitors are recorded. In addition, the group was asked to ensure observations of the children are used to plan the next steps for children's play, learning and development and to improve opportunities for children to build on their natural curiosity as learners.

Following the group's last education inspection, the group was requested to develop the programme of assessment, to ensure regular assessments are undertaken on children across all areas of learning and to use the information to plan for individual children's future learning. Also there was a request to improve opportunities for

parents to share with staff what they know about their child, to aid ongoing assessment. Finally the setting was asked to increase opportunities for children to participate in activities involving calculation, the local environment, gross motor development and information and communication technology.

To help develop the quality of the care provision, the group now has a contract for the yearly checking of electrical equipment, the medication book is signed by parents, attendance times of visitors and children are recorded. Observations are used in planning activities to support children's development and children take part in stimulating activities to build on their natural curiosity as learners. These improvements have had a positive impact on the quality of care offered to the children. However, the actual attendance times of staff are not recorded and a shelf in the playroom is not secured to the wall and poses a potential risk to children.

To help develop the quality of the educational provision, the staff have now arranged for parents to have opportunities to share what they know about their child to aid assessment. Children have increased opportunities to explore the local environment, use information and communication technology and develop their large muscle skills. Staff undertake regular observations and assessments of the children. These improvements have had a positive impact on the quality of the educational provision offered to the children. However, children have limited chances to develop their calculation skills and staff are not consistently planning sufficiently challenging activities to support individual children's future learning. As a result learning is not always fully maximised.

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.

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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):

- ensure the daily arrival and departure times of staff are recorded
- make sure storage units in the playroom do not pose a hazard to children

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 the assessment programme to ensure suitably challenging activities are planned to support individual children's future learning
- improve opportunities for children to initiate and develop their own creative ideas through art and craft. Develop the programme for mathematics to ensure children have the chance to regularly take part in practical problem solving activities that offer sufficient challenge.

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