



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY262422

DfES Number: 542056

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/07/2004
Inspector Name Heather Morgan

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Noah's Ark Childcare Centres
Setting Address 30 Looe Street
 Plymouth
 Devon
 PL4 0EA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Nyree Christine Squires

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Noah's Ark Childcare Centre was established in July 2003. It is part of a privately owned, small nursery chain and operates from a refurbished three-storey listed building on the edge of the Barbican, close to Plymouth city centre.

The youngest children, aged under two years, are accommodated on the first floor, where there are two base rooms, a separate sleep room, toilet and nappy changing facilities. Children aged over two years are accommodated on the ground floor, where there are one large and two smaller base rooms, toilet and nappy changing facilities. There is an enclosed garden, accessible from the ground floor and first floor. The second floor accommodates an office and staff rooms.

There are currently 74 children aged from birth to five years on roll. This includes seven funded three-year-olds and two funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group currently supports children with special educational needs, but none for whom English is not their first language.

The group is open on weekdays, from 07:30 to 18:00, all year round. After school and holiday care is provided for children up to the age of 12 years, and there are currently 15 children registered for out of school care.

Seventeen staff work with the children. Twelve are appropriately qualified and the other five are currently working towards early years qualifications. The group receives support from the Foundation Stage Advisory Team, the National Day Nurseries Association and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Noah's Ark Childcare Centre provides good quality care for children.

The nursery offers a bright, welcoming environment with interesting and colourful displays and well-resourced base rooms for children of different ages. Daily routines are well-organised to ensure that staff are deployed appropriately and that children

have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors. There is a clear operational plan; policies and procedures are understood and implemented well by the staff, underpinning their good practice.

Staff give high priority to children's health, safety and welfare. There are good procedures in place to support this and staff with designated responsibilities in these areas undertake their duties well, providing good support for other staff. Health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that potential hazards are identified and appropriate steps taken to reduce risks to children.

Children are grouped with their peers and offered interesting activities to promote their progress and development. Activities for babies are particularly imaginative and stimulating and offer good opportunities for them to explore and investigate a range of different materials. Some of the activities for two-year-olds are over-directed by adults which limits their opportunities to select and use resources independently. Children's behaviour is good. Staff provide good role models and use praise and encouragement effectively to promote and reward good behaviour. They are supported well by a member of staff with specific responsibilities in this area, developing appropriate strategies to manage challenging behaviour and working with parents to ensure a consistent approach.

Staff have developed good relationships with parents. There is good information about the nursery and its activities, available through regular discussion, noticeboard and newsletters. Key workers provide individual information using daily contact books.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- Daily routines are well-organised, staff deployed well and children have opportunities to access different areas of the nursery throughout the day.
- Health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly to maintain a safe environment, identify potential hazards and reduce risks to children.
- Staff with specific areas of responsibility undertake their duties well to support all members of staff.
- Activities for children from birth to two years are interesting, stimulating and provide good opportunities for them to explore and investigate a wide range of materials.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for two-year-old children to select and use resources independently and to initiate activities for themselves.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
3	Extend opportunities for two-year-olds to select and use resources independently and to initiate activities for themselves.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Noah's Ark Childcare centre offers generally good quality nursery education where children enjoy learning through a range of interesting activities. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Their progress in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Children are confident, well behaved and show independence.

Teaching is generally good. The key strengths are due to the enthusiasm of the staff who work well together as a sensitive team, who communicate well and who show a genuine interest in the children and their individual stages of development. The staff's generally sound understanding of the Foundation Stage enables them to plan an interesting range of practical activities although some of the early learning goals do not receive sufficient emphasis. The planning system is currently being developed and refined. The nursery has children attending who have special educational needs and there is an effective system in place to provide good support. There are no children attending who have English as an additional language. The assessment of children's learning is completed regularly and day-to-day observations are used informally yet effectively to ensure that children are enabled to progress at an appropriate pace and receive sufficient support and challenge in their learning. The setting has a good range of equipment to cover all areas of learning which are generally used well to support learning.

Leadership and management are very good and staff are supported in their professional development. The setting is committed to improvement and quality assurance and maintain contact with the Plymouth Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Early Years Advisory Team. There is a generally good partnership with parents. Some helpful information is provided and they are informed, in general terms, of forthcoming themes. Regular communication is welcomed.

What is being done well?

- The staff know all the children very well, support their individual interests and extend their learning effectively.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world is given very good emphasis.
- Children enter the setting happily, confidently and settle quickly to play.
- Children are able to concentrate well at their chosen activities.
- There is strong leadership and management and a commitment to ongoing improvement.

What needs to be improved?

- monitoring of planning to ensure that all aspects of the six areas of learning receive sufficient, regular attention and that practice reflects planning
- the ways in which parents are able to access information about the planned programme in a clear and helpful format and which will enable them to be involved their children's learning

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enter the setting happily, confidently and settle quickly to play. They have good relationships with staff and each other and are able to share popular resources and take turns well. They concentrate for substantial amounts of time at their chosen tasks and greet their playmates in friendly fashion, inviting them to join their game. Although children discuss their feelings very thoughtfully there are limited opportunities to explore a sense of self through dressing up and role-play.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are lively conversationalists and are keen to share their news. Some are very competent at writing their own names and enjoy making marks although note taking materials in role-play and examples of names to explore are not routinely provided. Some good reference is made to the sounds that letters make but this is not fully developed and extended. Children enjoy listening to stories which are well presented. Their own engagement with books during free play is limited.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are very confident in recognising shapes and are able to name very complicated examples. They are able to compare sizes and are confident counters, often recognising numerals. Good use is made of mathematical language to do with size and position but staff do not take sufficient advantage of everyday play to consolidate children's mathematical understanding by enabling them to understand what happens when one or two items are added to, or taken away, from another.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show a good understanding of their local environment and its features, for example they are able to describe the function, and sequence of traffic lights and how they regulate traffic flow. They have frequent walks to observe nature and look at the features of living things. They use tools such as magnifying glasses, very carefully to look closely at similarities and differences and show genuine interest in their discoveries. Simple technology is used effectively to support learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop their small muscles effectively using tools, scissors and by manipulating dough. They are able to, very proudly, manage their own buckles and fastenings. They use wheeled toys with skill and control and crawl through play tunnels showing a good awareness of space. There are some opportunities to climb and balance but they do not present appropriate challenge to older and more able children. Health and bodily awareness is given limited emphasis.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children enjoy singing and have an extensive repertoire of lively songs which they really enjoy. They keep good time and show a sound awareness of rhythm. They explore the various textures they encounter in their play, such as fine sand and crunchy cereal and there are good opportunities to be freely creative in collage and artwork. The children create complex small-world imaginative play but opportunities to enjoy role-play and use varying types of music to inspire their learning are limited.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- monitor planning to ensure that all aspects of the six areas of learning receive sufficient, regular attention and that practice reflects planning
- improve ways in which parents are able to access information about the planned programme

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.