



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 110006

DfES Number: 582581

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	29/03/2004
Inspector Name	Elly Bik-Kuen Wong

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Noah's Ark Pre-School
Setting Address	Townhill Farm Community Centre Townhill Way, West End Southampton Hampshire SO18 3NN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Noah's Ark Pre-School Committee
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Noah's Ark Pre-School Committee
Address	U/A U/A

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 Pre-school has been registered since 1990. It is a community pre-school owned and managed by a parents committee, and offering sessional care to children from two to under five years. The pre-school operates from the Townhill Farm Community Centre at Townhill Way, West End, Southampton. The Centre offers disabled access and toilet facilities. The Pre-school has the use of the main hall, side room, kitchen and toilets. There is a fully enclosed outside play area. The pre-school serves the area of West End and wider community.

It is the policy of the pre-school to take children from 2 years nine months. There are 46 children on roll, including 17 funded 3-year-olds, and 19 funded 4-year-olds. The pre-school is able to support children with special needs, and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven staff, and usually four to five of them work at each session. Three staff have relevant qualifications for their roles.

The Pre-school opens during term time, on Monday and Tuesday, from 09:15 to 11:45; and from 12:20 to 14:50. It also opens on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 09:30 to 12:00. From September 2004, all morning sessions will be from 09:30 to 12:00. The Pre-school receives support from the Early years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

The Pre-school provides satisfactory sessional care for children from two to under five years.

The Pre-school is a well established community pre-school that has close links with the local community. Despite the constraints of the shared venue, the staff provide a safe and comfortable environment with suitable facilities for children. The premises are spacious and equipped with a range of equipment for children to learn through play. However, more varied resources and activities should be offered to make it a

stimulating and welcoming environment for children of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Amidst the recent personnel changes, the staff need to work closely with the committee to further develop the team's competence in meeting the National Standards and the staff qualification requirements. Most paper work is in place, but it needs to be updated, more rigorous and organised, and readily available.

The staff are safety conscious and care for children in a safe and secure manner. They follow sound hygiene procedures, and help children to learn about them through the daily routine. They work with parents to meet children's health and dietary requirements. There are regular snacks for children. The staff relate well to children; they praise and value them. The children can access easily a basic range of toys each session. However, there should be more imaginative, role, and creative play, and activities promoting understanding of diversity.

The staff are kind and gentle, and handle children's behaviour in a sensitive manner. They are aware of children's differences, and treat them with equal concern. However, the staff would benefit from on-going training for handling a wide range of abilities, needs, and behaviour.

The current staff team strive to build up good relationships with parents. They need to keep parents better informed about the group's operation and their children's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- The staff provide a safe and secure environment for children to learn through play. The premises are clean, well maintained, and spacious with suitable facilities, including an enclosed outside play area. There is disabled access and toilet available.
- The staff are committed to providing a range of play activities for children each day, despite the tedious process of setting up and packing up due to shared premises at the community centre. The children can access easily the toys and books set up by staff each day, and a wider selection through rotation during the week.
- The staff relate well to children. They are kind and gentle, and make them feel safe and secure. They praise and value children, and handle their behaviour in a sensitive manner.
- Staff liaise with parents over their individual health, dietary, and other requirements. They acknowledge children's differences, and treat them with equal concern. Children receive support from staff if they need to use inhalers for asthma, while those who wear nappies are given the same opportunity to attend.
- The staff care for children in a safe and hygienic manner. They supervise

children closely and accompany them to the toilets along the corridor of the shared building. The staff carry out daily premises check, and also ensure that only named parents/carers are allowed to collect the children from the Pre-school. The staff encourage children to learn about good hygiene through the daily routine of hand washing. They assist young children's toileting through adapting the adult size toilets with child's seats and foot stools.

- The staff have begun to use key worker meetings for keeping parents better informed about their children's progress.

What needs to be improved?

- strategies for meeting the minimum fifty per cent staff qualification requirement; and arrangements for ensuring that all staff, particularly those with managerial roles, have up-to-date working knowledge of the National Standards, through in-service training or other means
- communication and clear designation of roles of key personnel, so as to enhance joint working between staff and committee
- the range of toys, books, displays, and activities on offer, so as to facilitate more and better imaginative/role/creative play and positive images/themes of diversity
- understanding and expertise in handling children with a wide range of needs/abilities/behaviour, through on-going training and close working with parents and relevant agencies/professionals
- communication with parents, through providing up-to-date information about the setting's operation and policies; and parents' access to their children's progress reports (verbal and written) on a regular basis
- the details, organisation, and accessibility of documents and procedures within the setting, such as staff check records; complaints procedure/record; daily register; parental agreement for seeking emergency medical treatment; and incident/behaviour/ key worker records.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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 must take the following actions by the date shown		
Std	Action	Date
2	Identify strategies for meeting the minimum fifty per cent staff qualification requirement; and for ensuring that all staff, particularly those with managerial roles, have up-to-date working knowledge of the National Standards, through in-service training or other means.	01/08/2004
3	Extend the range of toys, books, displays, and activities on offer, so as to facilitate more and better imaginative/role/creative play and positive images/themes of diversity.	01/08/2004
14	Formulate a programme with timescales, to update and improve the details, organisation, and accessibility of documents and procedures within the setting, where appropriate, such as staff check records; complaints procedure/record; daily register; parental agreement for seeking emergency medical treatment; incident/behaviour/key worker records.	01/08/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
12	Improve communication and ensure clear designation of roles of key personnel, so as to enhance joint working between staff and committee.
10	Improve understanding and expertise in handling children with a wide range of needs/abilities/behaviour through on-going training and close working with parents and relevant agencies/professionals.
12	Improve communication with parents through providing up-to-date information about the setting's operation and policies; and ensure parents' access to their children's progress reports (verbal and written) on a regular basis.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Noah's Ark pre-school provision of nursery education is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses in provision.

The quality of teaching has some significant weaknesses. Staff spend time working with the children. However the structure and planning of the session does not occupy the children fully. Staff are not familiar with the foundation stage and early learning goals, and are unable to adequately support children with special needs, as they have not yet accessed relevant training.

The present system of assessment is fragmented and does not reflect the areas of learning. Observations are not used to inform planning and activities are not evaluated. In addition, there is a lack of extension activities for more able children.

The leadership and management of the setting has some significant weaknesses. Recent personnel changes have been stressful for the remaining staff, and currently there is no evaluation of the sessions or individual activities. The supervisory staff attend local cluster meetings with other pre-schools and schools.

The partnership with parents is poor. Parents are not kept up to date concerning the policies and procedures within the setting, and are not invited to share knowledge of their own children. The parents' involvement with their children's learning is limited due to the lack of information, although new parents are being given welcome booklets.

What is being done well?

- Children's mathematical development is generally good. They learn how to use number in everyday situations. Practical activities are provided to help children understand size and shape as well as to promote mathematical language.
- Children's physical development is generally good. They are confident when using a variety of tools as well as large physical play equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and the early learning goals. This includes updating knowledge relating to the support offered to children with special needs
- planning and assessment, in order to progress children's learning in all areas
- sufficient opportunities to progress learning in communication language and

literacy, with particular reference to sounds of letters and labelling around the setting, and to extend communication describing real/imaginary experiences

- sufficient opportunities to progress learning in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and personal social and emotional development, with particular reference to role-play, freedom of expression of own feelings and investigation and exploration of the natural world
- opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has not addressed the key issues from the last inspection in any meaningful way. The key issues are therefore carried forward and included in the key issues of the current inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are keen to learn and make choices about their activities. They work well independently, but are not encouraged to take part in spontaneous activities which encourage enthusiasm or investigation. Children are given few opportunities to share their own views, feelings or experiences, such as during a circle time or with key workers at snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children begin to write their own names, and link the sounds and letters when reading their names. They understand that print carries meaning and how books are structured. Children are not offered opportunities to attempt writing for a variety of purposes such as during role play or labelling their own work. They are not encouraged to discuss real or imagined experiences with staff or their peers.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children learn how to use numbers for counting and have an awareness of shape and size. They are introduced to mathematical language during practical activities such as peg boards. More able children are not sufficiently challenged to extend their understanding of number, for example talking about subtraction while singing number rhymes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Although children have access to a wide range of construction sets, and build a assortment of models, they otherwise have access to a poor selection of resources to support learning and understanding of the world. Children have little opportunity to increase their awareness of the world and their place within it such as through their families, homes and local environment. They have few opportunities to explore living things and how they grow.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children demonstrate ability during physical play and enjoy climbing, balancing and kicking a ball. Most children participate during music and movement sessions, as well as obstacle courses, demonstrating some sense of space. Children are confident in using a range of tools and materials including pencils, stencils, paint rollers, glue sticks, spades, rolling pins, cutters, and construction materials. However, there is insufficient appropriate equipment to extend physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
	Children explore texture through varied activities including glue, play dough, sand and water play. However there are few opportunities to use their imagination, or express themselves freely during role-play and dressing up. Opportunities for children to participate in daily art and craft activities are limited, and access to explore paint, collage and modelling recycled materials are poor.
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and the early learning goals, and increase knowledge relating to supporting children with special needs
- devise and implement an effective system of planning and assessment in order to progress children's learning in all areas
- provide sufficient opportunities to progress learning in communication language and literacy, with particular reference to sounds of letters and labelling around the setting, and extend opportunities for children to discuss real/imaginary experiences
- provide sufficient opportunities to progress learning in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and personal social and emotional development, with particular reference to role-play, freedom of expression and investigation/exploration of the natural world
- take appropriate steps to enable all parents to become involved in their children's learning.

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.