



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY269854

DfES Number: 546278

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	08/02/2005
Inspector Name	Diane Mary O'Neill

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Noah's Ark Nursery
Setting Address	Shephall View Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 1RR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Noah's Ark Day Care Nursery 4713308
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Noah's Ark Day Care Nursery
Address	3 Chestnut Walk Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 4DD

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 Nursery has been open for a number of years, the current owners have operated it since August 2003. It operates from a single story building, with office and staff accommodation, kitchen, children bathroom, an open plan pre-school and toddler area, as well as enclosed baby area. It is situated in the Bedwell area of Stevenage in Hertfordshire. A maximum of 73 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m, for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to the secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 60 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the Stevenage area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff 8 of the staff, including the manager's hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 2 staff working towards a qualification. The nursery have input from a qualified teacher and Early Years Development worker.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Noah's Ark Nursery is of good quality overall. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals within their personal, social and emotional development, mathematics, physical and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and use planning fairly successfully in most areas to introduce children to an effective learning environment. The areas of communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world require further development to increase children's knowledge and learning.

Planning and assessment within the nursery is generally good, they use observations and assessment to track children's progress in relation to the stepping stones. The key worker system enables staff to be aware of all the children's learning and development. However some areas of learning and the use of evaluation and monitoring of records could be further extended to ensure children reach their full potential.

Leadership and management is generally good. The nursery has an extremely dedicated and committed team of staff. The staff are very supportive of each other and work well together in providing a positive learning environment for all children.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are welcomed into the nursery, where there are good opportunities to talk informally and formally with staff. They attend parents' evenings and are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social, and emotional development is well fostered. This enables the children to feel settled, happy, secure and confident in the group. Children are learning to share and play cooperatively and behaviour is good.
- Children use mathematical equipment confidently. Staff support children in activities allowing them opportunities to develop and discover mathematical knowledge for themselves. They are well supported in all areas and have sound understanding of a variety of different mathematical concepts.
- Children's physical development is well fostered in all areas. There is a good selection of resources to extend children's learning capabilities. For example, sit and ride toys, climbing equipment, developing throwing and catching skills. Resources are available to define fine motor skills such as glue sticks, drawing and mark making materials and construction opportunities.

- Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. There is a good informal and formal system in place for the sharing of information, such as newsletters, prospectus, parents evenings, notice boards, and daily communication with staff.

What needs to be improved?

- Opportunities for all children to have an increasing awareness of letters and sounds they make, through structured play as well as more focused teaching.
- Organisation of activities to ensure they effectively enable children to play and learn.
- Systems for the monitoring and evaluation of children's learning, which includes sufficient challenge, to enable children to reach their learning potential.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the first Nursery Education Inspection under a new registration and different management. They have made generally good progress since the last education inspection, by addressing the key issues raised. These were; "The further revision and development of methods of recording children's attainment and progress". Staff have worked hard on their procedure for evaluation and monitoring of children's development. This however is an area for further development, as challenges for children's learning is not as clear as it could be.

"The provision of extended opportunities for children to use technology to support their learning and to have on-going responsibility for caring for living things which depend upon them" was another key issue. The nursery has increased learning opportunities for the children with daily use of a computer, and also within activities, showing different forms of technology. They also study nature and things that live and breathe.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children form good relationships with peers and adults. They make independent choices and work confidently seeking support when needed. Their concentration levels are good as they become absorbed in activities. They share resources and behaviour is generally good, due in part to the stimulating activities on offer. Children are secure and confident, reinforced by staff with constant praise and encouragement. Their independence skills are increased as they help themselves to equipment.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident speakers as they join in activities including sand, playing on the mat with cars and in small group work sessions. Staff skilfully extend children's vocabulary as they interact during play. They are starting to learn to listen at story time, and are aware of simple commands. Their marking making skills are being developed through a variety of resources and play opportunities. Some further development of linking sounds to letters is required.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use numbers for counting and many are at different levels within their counting, but are well supported and encouraged by the staff. They access a range of equipment to count, compare size, shapes and weight and understand simple calculation. They are also learning the use of mathematical concepts through activities such as sand and water; and well-planned mathematical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's curiosity is developing through a range of activities. They discover the natural world, enjoying a mini beast hunt, planting seeds and looking at the growing process of several things. They discover how things work and change through experiments with cooking, looking at ice. Magnets were available but organisation of the activity was poor, so children's learning was not well supported. They have excellent use of the computer and many learning programmes, which children clearly enjoy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children move confidently and demonstrate an awareness of space as they move independently selecting resources and activities. Staff plan a variety of opportunities for the children to experience different kinds of physical activities, such as climbing, using sit and ride toys, playing with balls. Children's dexterity is developed well; they have good hand and eye co-ordination and successfully use paintbrushes, scissors, pencils, threading toys and various construction.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children imitate life experiences in role-play and small world play with the use of familiar situations. Staff encourage children to develop their own ideas and support them well. Children respond well to sensory experiences, such as playing with sand, water, playdough. They take part in music either freely, where they express themselves or at dedicated singing times, where favourite songs are sung. Children can use a range of colours and textures through various art and craft activities.	

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

- Extend opportunities for all children to have an increasing awareness of letters and the sounds they make, through structured play and focused learning.
- Ensure planned and everyday activities are appropriate to enable children to play and learn effectively.
- Further develop the systems for evaluation and monitoring to sufficiently challenge children and ensure their learning potential is met at all stages of their development.

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.