



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 218196

DfES Number: 539838

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	04/10/2004
Inspector Name	Jacqueline Mason

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	NOAH'S ARK PLAYGROUP
Setting Address	HOLMCROFT COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWLANDS AVENUE , STAFFORD STAFFORDSHIRE

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of HOLMCROFT YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	HOLMCROFT YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE
Address	HOLMCROFT YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWLANDS AVENUE STAFFORD STAFFORDSHIRE ST16 1NL

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 Playgroup opened in 1977. It operates from a large hall in the youth and community centre in the Holmcroft area of Stafford. The playgroup have their own toilet facilities and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 29 children aged from 2 years to 4 years on roll. This includes nine funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup currently supports children with special needs and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens on Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00.

Six full-time and part-time staff work with the children. Half of them have early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently studying for NVQ3 in Childcare and Education. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) and receive support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership(EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Noah's Ark Playgroup provides a good standard of care for children. Staff are friendly and approachable. They have good relationships with parents and children and a consistent routine is followed that helps children to be settled and confident. There is an effective key worker system in place that ensures each child has a named person who is responsible for co-ordinating information about their needs and development. An appropriate programme of adult-led and child-initiated activities is provided. Children are developing independence in selecting activities.

Good attention is paid to ensuring that children can play safely, although electric sockets must be checked before children arrive. Security is good. There are effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children. Although staff do not have

written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, they have a good understanding of health and safety issues. Children are encouraged to have regard for personal hygiene. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and are confident to report concerns in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

A varied range of activities is provided to promote all areas of development. Planning takes account of the Foundation Stage of learning but as yet does not consider 'Birth to Three Matters' for children under three. Equal opportunities are promoted well. Staff have a very good understanding of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and work to ensure that all children can participate fully.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept informed about the provision and their children's progress and are encouraged to be involved in the life of the playgroup. Although the complaints procedure does not include the contact details of the regulator, policies and procedures are shared with parents. Confidentiality is maintained.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable as no actions were raised at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- A consistent routine and good interaction between adults and children helps children to be settled and confident. Staff are interested in what the children say and do. A good programme of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables children to develop independence in selecting and carrying out activities of their choosing.
- Staff know the children well. An effective key worker system is in place that helps ensure children's individual needs are met. Staff have a good understanding of the current legislation and guidance in relation to special needs and work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop to their full potential.
- The management of children's behaviour is good. Staff act as positive role models and encourage good behaviour through praise and valuing children's individual efforts. Strategies to manage challenging behaviour are consistent and appropriate to the children's ages and level of understanding.
- There are excellent partnerships with parents. Procedures to keep them informed about the provision and their children's progress are effective. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the playgroup.

What needs to be improved?

- consideration of the development of 'Birth to Three Matters'
- the arrangements to include the name and contact number of the regulator in

the complaints procedure

- the arrangements to obtain written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- the procedures to ensure that electrical sockets accessible to children are covered at all times when children are present.

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
12	Include the name and contact number of the regulator in the complaints procedure
6	Ensure that electrical sockets accessible to children are inaccessible at all times when children are present.
7	Obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Noah's Ark Playgroup offers high quality provision overall which helps children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and effective written activity planning ensures that all areas of learning are addressed, although it does not include adaptation or extension activities for more or less able children. Staff however know the children well and the observation and assessment of children is effective to help staff identify individual needs. Each child has an individual play plan and developmental records that are reviewed regularly. Staff interact well with the children and provide an interesting range of adult-led activities although opportunities for children to see their name and numerals written are not sufficient. Staff have a good understanding of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and ensure that individual targets are clearly identified, shared with parents and monitored. Children's behaviour is managed well. Clear and consistent boundaries are appropriate. Staff encourage good behaviour through praise and valuing children's individual efforts.

Leadership and management of the playgroup is very good. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Professional development is encouraged and supported. There are effective systems in place to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the playgroup and the quality of its nursery education.

Partnerships with parents are very good. There are effective procedures in place to provide parents with quality information about the nursery and its provision. Parents are kept informed about their children's developmental progress and are encouraged to share what they know about their child. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- A familiar routine is provided by staff that promotes children's self-confidence. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that enable children to have choice and work independently.
- Activities provided are interesting, varied and challenging. Planning is effective to ensure that all areas of learning are addressed. Staff are aware of the learning intentions of activities and provide children with appropriate resources that they use competently and appropriately.
- Children have good relationships with each other and with adults. They initiate interactions with each other and co-operate well in child initiated small group activities.

- Staff interact well with the children and take an interest in what they say and do. They respond well to children's individual needs. The legislation and guidance with regard to special educational needs is understood well and staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure children have opportunities to develop to their full potential.

What needs to be improved?

- the further development of written plans to include the adaptation and extension activities that are carried out with more or less able children and the recording of the provision of opportunities for children to recognise numerals and their names when written.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children separate readily from their main carer and enjoy their time in playgroup. They are developing good levels of independence both in personal skills and in choosing activities. A good level of interest is shown in activities provided for them. Relationships with adults and peers are developing well. Children are confident to seek out others for support and are making attachments within the group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are developing good vocabulary based on their own experiences and adult input. Language is used well in practical and imaginary situations and children are able to speak in complex sentences. Children show an interest in letters and sounds. They show an interest in print and illustrations and handle books carefully and appropriately, turning pages one at a time.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show an interest in numbers and counting and use number in everyday play situations. They count reliably up to five and some children are able to count to ten. Calculation skills are developing well. Children enjoy problem solving and confidently count two groups of objects to find a total. They use mathematical language appropriately and are learning about the names and the properties of shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are developing investigation skills and enjoy exploring how things work. Skills in everyday technology and information technology are developing well and children are able to complete simple programmes with adult support. They are developing an awareness of time and place and confidently predict the day of the week. Children show an interest in the natural world and the world around them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are developing a good awareness of space and judge space well in relation to their own bodies and to equipment. They enjoy exploring ways of moving over, under and through equipment using crawling, sliding and rolling techniques. Control over objects is increasing and children throw and kick well. Children enjoy exploring malleable materials. They are learning about health in everyday situations.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children take part in a range of role play situations based on their own and imagined experiences. Children enjoy exploring colour, texture and media through collage, painting, construction and drawing. They recognise different colours and name them accurately. Individual creativity is developing through a range of art and craft activities. Children enjoy simple songs and rhymes and join in enthusiastically with actions.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no key issues to report, but consideration should be given to the issues identified below.
- The further development of written plans to include extension and adaptation activities for more and less able children and record planning for numeral and name recognition.

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.