

Noah's Ark Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sue Hall

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Noah's Ark Nursery opened in 1994 and operates from a refurbished self-contained unit in the grounds of Birchington Primary School and on the same site as a Children's Centre. It is situated in Birchington, Kent. The Nursery may care for no more than 60 children under 8 years; of these, not more than 60 may be in the early years age group, and of these, not more than 3 may be under 2 years at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.15am to 3.30pm. There are before and after school sessions for children to the age of 11. Before school sessions are from 8.15am to 8.45am and the after school club operates from 3.15pm to 5.30pm term times only, with some additional holiday club weeks. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 73 children aged from two to under five years on roll, with an additional 16 attending the before and after school club. Children receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The nursery supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are 11 staff working with the children, ten of whom hold an early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification Level 2, 3 or 4. Two staff have completed the Kent Advanced Play-Work certificate and one is completing a degree in early years studies.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a good nursery that provides a stimulating and welcoming environment for the children. Overall their welfare is promoted well through good procedures and they respond positively to the care and support they are given. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement, particularly in ensuring children's next steps are used in leading future planning and in reviewing behaviour management procedures. Risk assessments are not always rigorous. Children's language development is not promoted sufficiently. Self-evaluation is accurate and informs improvement planning so that generally children make good progress in all areas of their early learning and development. The staff team work well together and are led effectively therefore ensuring there is good capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- encourage children's language development by prompting them to discuss their ideas in greater detail and using more words in displays
- ensure that the risk assessments cover everything with which a child may

come into contact, such as the storage of equipment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding procedures are good because staff have a comprehensive knowledge of how to keep children safe and of child protection issues. There are rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures so, for example, full checks are made of newly appointed staff before they start work with the children. Arrangements for entering and leaving the nursery, including the out of school provision, are carefully managed and ensure that children are kept safe on a busy site. Security is good and children are carefully supervised in the indoor and outdoor areas.

Risk assessments are carried out regularly and appropriately but are not always clear or detailed enough in identifying storage issues of materials in several areas. The nursery has a good number and range of carefully considered policies to support the welfare and education of the children. These are reviewed annually but not always dated and signed to reassure parents and carers when this has been done and by whom.

The staff team is well led, with clear lines of responsibility to ensure the smooth running of the sessions. Staff are keen to keep improving the quality of provision. They attend regular meetings and contribute to the planning and on-going self-evaluation of what works well and where improvements can be made. Adults are well-qualified and attend a very good number and range of courses, which directly benefit the children. Good-quality resources are used to support all areas of learning with materials readily accessible for the children to choose from.

Since the last inspection, considerable improvement has been made in the planning of activities and in ensuring a good balance between child-chosen and adult-led activities. This is illustrated when children are encouraged to practise writing their names; others discuss books with a member of staff whilst a group decide what they would like to add to the water tray to make it more interesting. At times, though staff miss the opportunity to extend children's speaking further through more detailed use of questions and of key words in displays, specifically to encourage an early interest in reading and writing.

The setting is committed to inclusive practice and identifies when some children need additional support. Partnerships with outside agencies ensure that should further support be required this is accessed speedily. Parents and carers of children with high level additional needs speak with warmth of how well they feel their child's needs have been catered for, ensuring that they make a happy and successful start to their education. Charts around the nursery show commitment to learning some words and actions from sign language. Children enjoy learning about festivals including the recent celebration of Chinese New Year.

Parents and carers form good relationships with their children's key persons. Of those spoken to during the inspection, all strongly appreciate the friendliness, support and openness of the staff. Their child's 'Learning Journeys' records are

very detailed, shared with their families in discussions and passed to their next school or setting to support the following stage of their education.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and generally confident young learners who look forward to attending nursery. On arrival, they go straight to their favourite activities, including the mezzanine book area and wooden train track. Staff facilitate the children's play in an effective manner and understand when to support them or introduce new ideas, such as changing what is in the water tray. Children also initiate their own activities including using the play cooking items in the home corner. Children's records and displays show wide usage of notes to record what the children do and say. This information is used well to collate the detailed 'Learning Journey' records and inform future planning. The good balance of child-chosen and adult-led activities promotes learning in all areas enabling the children to achieve well.

Children develop good physical skills when using trikes, wheeled vehicles and scooters and understand they need to stop at the zebra crossing. Staff use incidental opportunities well to talk to the youngest children about why they should wear a 'hard hat' on their building site. This emphasis on safety helps children understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Older children also know what is expected of them and demonstrate how to play safely without adult reminders.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as slices of pear and drinks of fresh water or milk. They like being chosen as helpers to get snacks ready for the others and wheel the snack trolley from the kitchen to the classroom carefully and with a clear sense of responsibility. They know they need to wash their hands before touching food and take care when putting spread onto their bread. A good range of visitors including the police, fire service, dentist and community warden support a focus on health and safety.

Children make a positive contribution to their own community by accessing and putting away resources and equipment. Most play well together and take turns. They have the opportunity to discuss incidents, reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility. Younger children's good behaviour and effort is recognised on a 'Reward Flowers' display. Petals are added with details when children have done 'something good' such as tidying, sharing and helping their friends. When they do something extra special a bee is then added to the picture. Effective use is made of 'persona' dolls to encourage children to discuss similarities and differences.

Children develop a good range of skills that help equip them for their future. Effective use is made of children's name cards for them to move to their coat pegs when they arrive and for early writing activities. Displays show that younger children have found out about shapes and used some of these to print 'our shapes pond' with differently numbered ducks. Children using building bricks are encouraged to count the number of bricks they add to their tower. All children

have access to a computer and have opportunities to use viewers and mirrors to explore, investigate and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 2 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met