

Noah's Ark Childcare Centres

30 Looe Street, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 0EA

Inspection date	02/01/2014
Previous inspection date	06/02/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff understand how children learn and interact well with them to support and extend their learning. As a result all children make good progress.
- There are very good systems in place for staff supervision and development. Staff use their training and skills effectively to reflect on practice and make changes that improve the quality of the provision for the children.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Staff place a high priority on involving parents in their children's learning and use a variety of different ways to engage them.
- There is very good support for children who need additional help in their learning.
- Staff skilfully use visual aids, such as signing and picture cards, to help children understand the nursery routines and expectations for behaviour.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to develop the monitoring of the progress of different groups of children, for example, boys and girls or different age groups, in order to more clearly identify targets for improvement.
- The organisation of resources does not always fully challenge children.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children in a range of activities throughout the nursery and talked to staff about their practice.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of an adult-led activity with the nursery manager.
- The inspector had discussions with a number of parents and took into account their views.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager, area manager and owner of the nursery.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including the nursery's self-evaluation, policies and procedures, children and staff records and complaints record.

Inspector

Ruth Thrasher

Full report

Information about the setting

Noah's Ark Childcare Centre nursery was registered in 2003 and is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is part of a small, privately owned nursery chain. It is situated in a converted three-storey listed building close to Plymouth city centre, near the Barbican area. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. The younger children are cared for in play rooms on the first floor and the pre-school room is on the ground floor. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, ten hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with Early Years Professional Status. Two staff are qualified to level 2. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for Bank Holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 70 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- extend the monitoring of children's progress to ensure gaps are closing rapidly for groups of children and help identify targets for improvement
- review the organisation of resources, particularly in the pre-school and baby rooms, to further promote learning and challenge for all children.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff are well qualified and use their skills and knowledge to ensure children receive the support they need to make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff show a good awareness of how children learn and develop and use effective teaching techniques to extend children's learning and challenge their thinking. Staff are very skilled at joining in with children's role-play and modelling various skills. For example, a staff member and a child write shopping lists together, each with their own pencil and pad. They discuss what they need to buy and then go 'shopping' for the items around the room, crossing them off the list as they find them. Children help to transform the home corner into a shop and one plays the shop keeper, taking the money and giving change from the till. The children enjoy and are engaged in their play. As a result they gain a range of skills that will support

them in their future learning.

Children have regular opportunities to play outdoors and the garden is very much part of the learning environment. This enables children's learning to be extended in different ways and on different scales. Children make patterns and marks on the ground with large chalks, which helps their physical development and creativity. Staff talk to them about the size and shape of the patterns they have made, introducing basic mathematical concepts. A staff member encourages the children to listen to the sounds and vary the rhythm as they bang metal kitchen implements on the fence. She uses words such as 'slow' and 'quiet' and asks a child if she can hit it five times. The child responds and counts the beats. Younger children show good levels of interest and concentration as they bathe the baby dolls. The adult joins in their play, encouraging their language by talking about what they are doing. She makes suggestions to extend the play such as, adding bubbles. She models drying the dolls on the towels and the children copy.

There is a good balance of adult and child-led activities. Children join in small group activities according to their age and ability. They take part in short focussed sessions led by an adult that help develop their communication and social skills. For example, a group of four children and an adult talk about Christmas day, passing round a cuddly toy when it their turn to speak. There are one-to-one sessions to support children with additional needs and staff have been trained by outside professionals to lead activities to support individual children. The nursery supports a large number of children who are learning English as an additional language. A map on the wall shows the country of origin of the many children and reflects the diversity of the nursery. Staff use a variety of techniques to help children with language and communication. They routinely use sign language and visual cues such as 'the routine train' and picture cards. This helps children feel included as they understand what is going to happen next.

Staff use observations and assessment effectively to identify children's next steps. The weekly planning works well in practice and ensures that children's individual needs are incorporated into the activities. Regular assessments, including the required progress check at age two, help ensure that individual children make good progress according to their starting points. Parents and carers are very much involved in their children's learning and the strong two-way communication contributes to children's progress. The home-link books enable parents to contribute achievements from home and staff to suggest activities that parents can do with children to support their learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Care practices in the nursery are good and support children's well-being. For example, there are safe and hygienic routines for nappy changing and for children to sleep. Children have positive relationships with staff who sensitively help them to settle in to the nursery after the holiday period. Staff meet children's emotional needs well, cuddling and reassuring them when appropriate. The key person system contributes to children's emotional security; each member of staff has a 'shadow' to enable that special relationship to continue at all times. Key persons support the children when they move to the next age

group with a series of introductory visits.

Staff encourage children to have a go and try to do things for themselves. Children help give out the plates at snack time, pour their own drinks and sweep up bits of paper after their play. Staff help children emotionally prepare for starting school by encouraging their independence for example, by putting on their own coats and wellingtons. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff use a variety of techniques to promote positive behaviour, such as a traffic light system of smiley and sad faces, picture cards and rewards such as sticker bracelets. As a result children are clear about the boundaries and expectations for behaviour. They learn about feelings and caring for each other through stories and discussion. Children know they must be kind to their friends and comment on this when they see another child acting inappropriately.

The environment is well resourced and welcoming. Children are able to choose activities and select the equipment they need for their activity and staff provide additional resources to extend their play. Staff regularly review the organisation of resources to support children's learning and development. There is scope to extend children's access to some creative resources in the pre-school room, such as modelling materials and painting equipment, which are stored in the corridor. The baby rooms are not used to their full potential to maximise the available space for babies to move freely and explore. One room is currently used as a cot room and staff are considering how best they could incorporate this space to enhance the provision. Overall the quality of the resources is good and they are clearly labelled and organised to enable children to make decisions about their play.

Staff teach children to keep themselves safe and promote healthy lifestyles through the daily routines in the nursery. For example, staff model good hygiene practices by wearing plastic hats, gloves and aprons when serving meals. They remind children to be careful when playing so that they do not hurt themselves or their friends. Children learn about the importance of hand washing by listening to a story about a princess who would not wash her hands. They each have their own labelled water bottle and staff regularly remind children to have a drink so they do not get thirsty. Healthy meals and snacks are provided throughout the day with lots of fresh fruit, which children clearly enjoy.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

A new manager, previously the deputy, was appointed at the beginning of the previous term and she has quickly got to grips with her role. She is supported by an area manager who oversees the group of nurseries, as well as a competent deputy and two staff with Early Years Professional status. Together they make a strong leadership team. There are very good systems in place for regular staff supervision and mentoring. Managers and room leaders demonstrate a strong ability to reflect on practice and make improvements to the provision. They use their skills and knowledge gained through professional qualifications and ongoing training to benefit the children.

The leaders and managers of the nursery have a good understanding of their

responsibilities in meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager carries out observations of staff practice to monitor the quality of the provision for children's learning. Any gaps in individual children's achievements are identified by effective ongoing assessment. However the nursery has not yet introduced systems to monitor relative achievements of different groups of children, such as boys and girls or different age groups, to ensure they all make rapid progress.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding procedures, including action they would take should they have concerns about a child in their care. They also know who to report to should they feel that their concerns had not been responded to appropriately. They are also clear about the 'whistle blowing' procedure should they have concerns about an adult in the nursery. Staff are clear on their responsibilities to deal with and record accidents and to notify the appropriate authorities of any serious injuries to children. Parents are also reminded to share any accidents their children have outside of the nursery to further promote their well-being.

There are robust procedures in place to promote children's safety within the nursery. All staff complete appropriate checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks, before they start work in the nursery. New staff undertake core training that includes safeguarding and complete a probationary period. Risk assessments and daily safety checks ensure that the premises and equipment are safe for children to use. Procedures, such as keeping the door open when nappy changing, protect children and staff. All visitors to the nursery are vetted by staff through television monitors before they are allowed access. This ensures children are secure in the nursery.

The nursery has good partnerships with other professionals to support the children, particularly where additional needs are identified. Staff work closely with specialist teams to support inclusion and communication. Children attend from a wide area and leave to attend many different schools. The nursery invites teachers to visit the children in the nursery and staff attend meetings to support children with additional needs when they start school. There is regular communication with parents, for example, through newsletters, parent evaluations and parents' evenings. Parents are invited to coffee mornings where staff lead sessions on different early years topics chosen by the parents.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY262422
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	945639
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	53
Number of children on roll	70
Name of provider	Noah's Ark Childcare Centres Limited
Date of previous inspection	06/02/2012
Telephone number	01752 601888

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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