

# Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup

Holmcroft Youth and Community Centre, Newlands Avenue, STAFFORD, Staffordshire, ST16 1NL

## Inspection date

14/02/2014

Previous inspection date

13/11/2008

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

1

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 1

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- Children are highly confident and show an excellent level of independence for their age; they show empathy and care for each other and cooperate exceptionally well when playing together.
- Teaching is firmly based on the staff's extremely good knowledge of how young children learn and develop. They fully understand that play and exploration provide key opportunities for children to think creatively, to solve problems and link their ideas and so children are supported in making outstanding levels of progress.
- Partnership with parents and other settings are highly effective and fully support all children's needs. This makes transitions a seamless and positive experience.
- Children have exceptionally good relationships with each other and staff. This enables them to feel confident in their learning environment, freely explore and extend their learning.
- The pre-school staff are committed to driving improvement in the day to day practice and in their own professional development to bring about sustained progress for 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.

## **Inspection activities**

- The inspector observed activities, children and staff interactions throughout the session.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, checked suitability of staff and the qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector observed snack time and their routine for tidying away.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and a selection of policies.
- The inspector spoke to parents and gained feedback and their opinions of the service provided.

## **Inspector**

Dawn Robinson

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Noah's Ark Pre-school Playgroup was registered in 1977 and is on the Early Years Register. 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. Access to the entrance of the playgroup is at the back of the building and all areas are easily accessible.

The playgroup serves the local area. It is open each weekday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 2pm, Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 3pm during term time. Five members of childcare staff are employed. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and the manager holds Early Years Professional Status. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 46 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-three- and four-year-old children.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider further development of displays to include environmental print in order to allow children to make connections between words they are familiar with and the letters and sounds they are beginning to learn.

### Inspection judgements

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

All children enter the playgroup highly confidently, easily separate from parents and are quick to find their chosen activity. There is a very calm and focused atmosphere. Children are well-motivated in their play. They make their own choices and show high levels of concentration as they stay on task for good amounts of time. They are all fully involved in purposeful play throughout. This is due to the high quality interaction from the staff team. All staff work at children's levels, engrossed in their play and using children's ideas and interests to extend their understanding and help them develop a higher level of thinking skills. Children benefit from an exceptionally well-organised learning environment both indoors and outdoors with a very good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children flourish because staff gather a wealth of information from their parents, both before and during their settling-in period. They recognise that each child is unique and actively support their learning and development extremely well in relation to their starting points. Observation and assessment of children at all ages are clear, precise and sharply focused. Staff identify next steps for their key children and these are successfully woven

into the planning and daily routines. As a result, staff are able to provide a wide-range of challenging and creative activities which promote active learning. Assessment is robust and closely monitored which enables staff to identify gaps in children's learning. This means, intervention can take place to target specific issues or problems to help individual learning. As a result, children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals and are extremely well-prepared for their future learning and the eventual move on to school.

Children feel valued as they are able to display their own work or special items in their individual display area. They can request resources and activities to be included in the planning by displaying them on the 'wish elephant'. There are opportunities in the environment to begin to link sounds to letters, for example, children's coat peg is labelled with their name and a picture of an object, both of which begin with the same letter sound. Low-level display boards are used effectively to reinforce children's understanding by displaying the numbers, colours and topics they have been learning about. However, there is scope to develop this resource a little further by including different types of print to support the very good level of work being done to help children recognise simple words and link letters to sounds. Older children benefit from age-appropriate adult-directed activities which support their transition into school. Children particularly enjoy playing the 'noisy neighbours' game which is based on a story. This activity requires the children to listen carefully to different sounds being made behind a screen by the adult, which supports the early stages of learning to link sounds to letters. An extensive range of opportunities engage children in mark-making and develop their creativity. For example, children have access to a trolley equipped with crayons, pencils, paint, glue and other materials which they can freely access at any time. The children listen well, following simple instructions during routines and in their play which enables them to acquire excellent skills in communication and language. Children also have opportunities to learn about other cultures and festivals. The staff invite visitors into the playgroup who can extend the children's knowledge and experiences, for example, a lady who is Chinese brought into the setting clothes for the children to dress-up in and a wide variety of different cultural resources. She showed the children how to use chopsticks and taught them some words in Chinese, increasing opportunities for all children to understand about differences.

Children have opportunities to develop their imagination in their outdoor 'mud kitchen' where they are able to use a variety of kitchen utensils and natural materials to create, for example, caterpillar pie made from mud, grass and catkins. Children learn about lifecycles as they watch the frogspawn they have collected turn into tadpoles then frogs and during the summer months they observe caterpillars change into butterflies. Children learn about the different properties of objects as they explore which objects will freely move down the plastic drainpipes and enjoy gathering other objects from the environment to experiment further and find out if their predictions are correct. Throughout the activity, staff skilfully provide support and encouragement when needed and know when to step back to allow the children to experiment for themselves. As a result, children consistently show curiosity, enthusiasm and the characteristics of effective learners.

Children enjoy stories, and the cosy book area enables individual or shared stories with

adults. A wide range of literature inspires children to choose books and create their own stories. Staff extend the children's knowledge of stories to incorporate other areas of learning. For example, staff support the children to create their own story based on a journey. The children decide on the characters they will meet in their story, for example, Shrek, unicorns and scarecrows. They create models of these characters using papier-mache and dress-up to act out their story. As a result, children learn about main characters in stories and become aware of how stories are structured, in addition to creating 3D models and using a range of different materials. Children are secure in many aspects of their mathematical development. The playgroup use a scheme called 'Ten Town' to support the children's understanding of numbers to 10. The children learn rhymes to support the recognition, ordering and formation of the numbers. The children enjoy singing and acting out number rhymes at circle time. Children's positional language is extended as staff play alongside the children with the doll's house. They choose different sized hearts to decorate their Valentine's Day cards, supported by an adult who encourages them to count and compare different sized hearts using mathematical language, such as small, medium and large. In addition, the adult talks about why they are making these cards and encourages children to talk about their loved ones and what makes them special. The adult models writing and the children make their own marks and decorations on their individual cards. Children develop their physical skills inside as they access stepping stones, blocks, slides and a see-saw. They express themselves creatively through role play, creative activities and musical opportunities.

The quality of teaching is consistently high across the whole staff team. The setting follows the Every Child a Talker programme which has had a significant impact on children's language and communication development. This is fostered efficiently by staff extending the children's vocabulary and thinking as they ask open-ended questions and listen carefully to the children's responses. All staff show dedication to the children throughout the session, joining in and extending children's learning from their interests. The utmost priority is given to providing the children with the support they need to make the maximum progress in their learning and development. Children who require significant support in order to make good progress are provided with targeted intervention based on their interests and in collaboration with parents. Assessments and observations support the extremely detailed progress check at age two. Staffs' strong commitment and extremely effective communication with parents ensures that children's learning and development benefit, as involving them enables parents to play a full and active role in their child's learning. For example, parents are able to access their child's records at any time and their child's key person regularly discusses their child's progress. Parents are provided with frequent newsletters to keep them informed about events and provide examples of activities they can do with their child at home. A child is chosen every week to be the 'star of the week' and a cuddly toy and bag of books, games and other resources are taken home to play with. Parents with specific skills or interests are encouraged to share these at the playgroup. An informative parent's noticeboard clearly illustrates the seven areas of learning and the characteristics of effective learning. Parents are encouraged to share children's achievements at home by writing them on an apple shaped piece of paper and displaying them on the tree in the entrance hall. There is a wealth of information for parents and opportunities for parents to display their own comments and suggestions.

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

Throughout the playgroup, children are extremely happy and very well-settled. They are highly confident as they engage in conversations with staff and visitors. Staff offer lots of positive praise and recognition for children's efforts and achievements. They are very attentive to the children as they listen to their requests and are fully aware of their individual needs, supporting very secure emotional attachments. All staff know children very well and, therefore, are able to meet their care and learning needs in a highly effective way. The staff offer children a highly stimulating and effectively challenging environment. They incorporate the interests of the children into the planning of resources and equipment is displayed to look very attractive to children, offering them a wide and varied choice. The group make the very best use of the space available with plans to further develop an area specifically for messy play, sand and water.

A well-established and extremely effective key person system operates within the playgroup. This helps children form secure emotional attachments and provides parents with a familiar person to share information with. Key persons demonstrate an excellent understanding of how their key children are developing and where they need to support future developments. All children are very settled, work well alongside each other and collaborate through shared play. Excellent settling-in processes further supports children and helps to build trusting relationships with parents. This ensures that children settle well and feel safe and secure in the environment.

Children's health, independence and self-esteem are very well-promoted and there are clear and consistently applied systems in place to protect them from cross-infection. Children enjoy healthy snacks, which include fresh fruit and vegetables, some of which the children have grown in the outdoor area. Children sit at tables for their snack with two children being chosen as the day's helpers and identified by wearing aprons. These children are given the responsibility of handing out cups and plates and tidying away after snack. Children are encouraged to open the small milk bottles and pour their own milk or water independently, passing the milk bottle and water to the other children when they have finished. Parents are given advice on the food they should provide to ensure children have healthy lunch boxes for those children who choose to stay for lunch. During both snack and lunchtime, staff sit with the children promoting good manners and engaging in conversation which supports the children to develop good social skills. Children are developing a strong awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle, for example, understanding the need to wash their hands after using the toilet or when they have been playing outside. They have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. The activities and resources provided to enhance their physical development and well-being are excellent. The children have the opportunity on a weekly basis to join in with music and movement sessions provided by an outside agency. Children are encouraged to listen to the music and follow instructions in a lively, fun and energetic session which inspires

the children to use different parts of their bodies, balance and develop their coordination. The children thoroughly enjoy spending time outdoors using their free flow system. The children have opportunities to dig in their raised beds and use the wide range of equipment outdoors, for example, slides, sand, water, bats and balls. Children learn to take risks and consider their own safety when, for example, using climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Children's behaviour is exceedingly well-managed, supported by the clear routines and very good organisation. Children's confidence and self-esteem are continuously raised by both adults and children. There is a clear and inspirational routine for tidying up with one child being given the role of 'inspector' and allocated a special hat. This child, the 'inspector', motivates and guides the other children as they tidy up. Upon completion of the toys and resources being put away the 'inspector' praises individual children for any special efforts and the other children applaud their good work. As a result, children are kind and considerate to each other and behaviour is excellent.

Superb relationships are being built with the local schools that the children will be moving to. Children have access to a 'Transition box' which contains items of school uniform from local schools which the children can dress-up in. There is an information book for individual schools which contains photographs of, for example, children's new teachers, coat pegs and the toilets. This promotes consistency and makes the move to school a positive experience for the children. Older children know how to find their own coat peg, practise changing their shoes when they bring pump bags into the playgroup and are shown how to put on their coats independently in readiness for school. Their independence is further developed at lunchtime when they are encouraged to find their own lunchbox, open their own containers and pack away when they are finished. Teachers visit the children in the playgroup setting and if required staff support children on their visits to school and when settling-in. As a result, children are confident and well-prepared for transition into their new school.

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

The attention to detail employed by the leadership team is outstanding and steers the playgroup in creating an environment where children make massive strides in their learning and development. The leaders have an excellent awareness of the curriculum and the progress individual children are making. Highly effective systems monitor the different opportunities children receive, which also enable leaders to identify any areas for greater focus and attention. Leaders and the whole staff team are passionate and enthusiastic in their work. There is continuous improvement with a clear focus on areas they want to develop further. For example, permission and funding has been granted to create a permanent, purpose built area for the construction of a dedicated creative area where children can freely engage in messy play and other creative and sensory activities.

The leaders have an excellent understanding of their responsibility to ensure that the playgroup meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Children's safety is of high

priority. Established systems are in place for security throughout the sessions, which also supports children's awareness of safety. Staff and leaders have an excellent understanding of the procedures to follow if they have a concern about children's well-being, following the clear procedures that are in place. Comprehensive documentation supports all aspects of the playgroup's work. Staff place a high emphasis on continually driving improvements in all areas and all staff, parents and children contribute to self-evaluation.

Partnership with parents is excellent. Parents are wholly valued and their views are sought and respected. Comments for improvement are welcomed and acted upon. Parents are extremely happy with the playgroup and comments received are very positive. Parents talked about the 'excellent care' their child receives from the approachable and supportive staff. Another parent talked about the exceptional support they had received in the form of advice and activities they could do at home to support their child. The staff are dedicated to working with parents and others and continually try to reach parents through different communication methods. Staff are friendly and welcoming, offering daily discussions with parents. More formal opportunities enable parents and key persons to have a catch up on children's development. This exchange of information and ideas for extending children's learning at home enables parents to be fully involved in their child's learning. Close liaisons with outside agencies are truly established to support individual children's development. In particular, links with some local schools are highly effective in supporting transition to school. Staff support parents in understanding the most vital areas in children's learning, such as in their independence, in order to make the move to school as smooth as possible.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	218196
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	871236
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	32
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	46
<b>Name of provider</b>	Holmcroft Youth & Community Centre Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13/11/2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	07952 732637

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## Type of provision

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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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