

Inspection of Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup

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

Inspection date: 17 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at the pre-school happy and excited. They are greeted warmly by the friendly staff and manager. Children settle quickly into the daily routines of the pre-school. They explore the exciting resources and toys that ignite their enthusiasm to learn. Staff provide an effective balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points. Children are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of the world. They plant and harvest their own fruit and vegetables and develop an awareness of the changing seasons. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They use positive behaviour strategies. For example, children are involved in deciding the rules of the pre-school and can explain these rules to visitors, demonstrating a clear understanding. Children play cooperatively alongside each other. They share, take turns and form special friendships. Children display a love of books and singing. They listen intently to stories and enthusiastically join in with familiar phrases and actions. Children develop positive attachments to staff and seek comfort and reassurance when needed. Staff give children an abundance of praise and encouragement, which helps children to feel valued and raises their self-esteem.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The devoted manager and staff have adapted well to the challenges faced due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. They understand the impact restrictions have had on children and their families, and make sure that all children are supported and continue to make good progress.
- The manager and staff identify what children already know and can do. They monitor the progress children make and accurately identify what children need to learn next. Staff use their knowledge of children's likes and interests to plan stimulating activities that support the next steps for their future development. However, on occasions, planned activities steer away from the specific learning intentions of the curriculum. This means that some activities do not help the youngest children to build on their prior skills.
- Children have lots of fun exploring and investigating the improved outside area. They are supported particularly well to develop their physical skills. Children learn to assess and manage risks, creating their own structures to climb and balance on using crates and planks. However, staff do not always thoroughly check the outside area for potential hazards before children go outside to play.
- Children become highly engaged as they dig in the soil in search of pretend dinosaur bones. They squeal with delight when they find one and excitedly show staff and their friends. Children articulately talk about different dinosaurs and successfully count how many pretend bones they have discovered.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills well. They talk clearly

to children and teach them to recognise letters and sounds in their names. Staff provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings. Children proudly tell staff that they are feeling 'fabulous'.

- Staff skilfully extend children's thinking and curiosity. Children demonstrate their knowledge of early science. They use small wooden building blocks to build a wall using alternative types of glue. Children test out their exploratory skills and make predictions on which glue will make the strongest wall.
- Children learn to practice good hygiene skills and are supported to develop their independence. The manager has established good links with the local school. This helps children to experience a smooth transition when they move on to the next stage in their learning.
- Children have opportunities to develop their awareness of diversity and other cultures. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. They work closely with parents and partner agencies to ensure the individual needs of the children are met in a timely manner.
- The manager and staff have established positive relationships with parents. They regularly talk to parents and share information about their children's accomplishments at the pre-school and at home. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school. They say the staff are approachable and friendly and their children make good progress. Parents say the staff and manager make the pre-school feel like one big happy family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of neglect or abuse. They have a good understanding of wider safeguarding concerns, including being drawn into extreme situations. The manager and staff have a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding protocols and actions to take if they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. The environment is safe and secure. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and are proactive in keeping their training and knowledge up to date. They supervise children well and maintain ratios to minimise the risk of accidents. Procedures are in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to support staff to make a clear link between the intent and delivery of planned activities so that they offer children the highest quality of education
- enhance daily risk assessment procedures to ensure that staff identify all potential hazards in the outside areas.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218196
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10127501
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	27
Name of registered person	Holmcroft Youth & Community Centre Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520112
Telephone number	07952 732637
Date of previous inspection	24 September 2019

Information about this early years setting

Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup registered in 1977 and is situated in the Holmcroft area of Stafford. It is open from 8.30am to 3pm Monday to Friday, during term time only. The setting employs five staff members, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above. The manager holds early years professional status. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Angela Hulme

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to look at how the curriculum is planned to meet children's needs and development.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and checked evidence of the suitability of the staff working in the nursery.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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