

Inspection of Noah's Ark Pre-School Playgroup

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

Inspection date: 25 April 2023

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and show that they feel safe and secure. They form secure relationships with staff, and older children engage in lovely conversations with staff and visitors. They like to talk about what they know and can do. Children are offered cuddles and reassurance when needed and they quickly settle. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Older children's behaviour is good. Younger children are beginning to regulate their own behaviour and build strong, friendly relationships with each other. Staff quickly step in when they see younger children's unwanted behaviour, and help them to understand the reasons why some behaviour is not appropriate towards others. Children are developing the essential skills needed for future learning.

Children are keen and curious learners. They make choices and decisions, for example where to play and what resources to play with. Children enjoy exploring different materials, such as glitter and pom-poms, while making art pictures as they learn about the Kings Coronation. They display positive attitudes to their learning and confidently develop their own interests. For example, children manipulate dough and kneed it with their fingers, and use rollers, scissors and shapes. This helps to strengthen the small muscles in their fingers in preparation for writing. Children play cooperatively and solve problems together. For example, they know how to operate the large interactive screen and develop their mathematical skills as they complete the puzzles and games.

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

- The manager has a clear curriculum intention which focuses on supporting children to gain appropriate communication and independence skills in line with their individual needs. Children access a curriculum that supports their development across the seven areas of learning.
- The long-standing team of staff know the children in their care well. Staff know about children's individual circumstances and any challenges they are facing at home. They use this knowledge to respond and adapt their teaching successfully to meet the needs of all children.
- Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes. They excitedly ask for the 'Happy song' at the start of the day. Toddlers and older children join in with dancing and moving their bodies energetically, and show good spatial awareness so not to bump into their friends. They take part in yoga sessions where they move their whole body with control. Staff are positive role models as they eagerly engage with the children, demonstrating the movements.
- Children enjoy choosing from the good selection of books available to them. They look at books independently, as well as sharing stories with their peers and staff. Staff foster children's interest in books and stories, reading books to

children throughout the day. Children show their love of books and stories as they eagerly tell visitors their favourite books they have at home.

- The manager uses her good knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs to support staff, children and their families, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents say that their children always arrive and leave happy. However, staff do not consistently communicate with all parents to further improve continuity in children's learning between the setting and home.
- Children are learning about the world outside their local community. The curriculum follows their interests and current events. For instance, children have helped to create a picture of the Queen and Paddington Bear, which opens up a discussion about the Queen's death and the new King.
- Mealtimes are a sociable occasion. Children sit with their friends and enjoy a range of appetising, healthy meals and snacks. The manager uses additional funding effectively to ensure that children do not miss out, and all receive a healthy and balanced diet at the setting. Staff support children's independence during mealtimes by teaching them how to hold their cutlery so they can learn to feed themselves.
- The manager places emphasis on recognising staff's well-being. She does this through regular informal meetings. The manager is aware of her own and staff's strengths. However, monitoring practice is not always consistent and effective in identifying where staff need further support and guidance, to fully extend children's learning experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that staff complete some training to support their existing knowledge, such as safeguarding processes. Staff understand the correct procedures in reporting concerns about a member of staff. The setting is secure; the main door and the outside play area gate are kept locked. This prevents unknown people entering the premises. Staff understand their responsibility in keeping children safe from harm. The manager and staff have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms which may indicate that children are at risk of harm or abuse. They know what to do in the event they have any concerns.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- make better use of supervision meetings, to foster a culture of mutual support and continuous improvement to the highest level
- improve partnerships with parents to share children's next steps, on order to support learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218196
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10284943
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	31
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Holmcroft Youth & Community Centre Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520112
Telephone number	07952 732637
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2021

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
Beverley Devlin

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on the children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and grandparents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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