

Inspection of Noah's Ark

Bibi House (Basement Studio Unit 5 & Suite 1A Ground Floor), 69-85 Whitmore Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B10 0NR

Inspection date: 12 June 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Leaders and staff provide a calm and caring environment, where children develop secure relationships with familiar adults. Staff interactions are warm, and routines are well established across all rooms. However, the provider's curriculum is not fully developed to ensure consistency and progression for children across the rooms. There is an over reliance on adult-directed group tasks during which children too often lose concentration. Teaching is inconsistently matched to children's individual needs. As a result, children's regulation, curiosity, engagement in learning and overall progress is hindered.

Leaders and staff place a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics across the setting. Staff plan number recognition and shape-naming activities, such as identifying and tracing numbers or matching shapes during circle time. In pre-school, children engage in phonics related tasks, such as tracing sandpaper letters and playing I-spy games to link sounds to objects. Leaders also provide 'take-home' books to extend children's early literacy beyond the setting.

Across age groups, staff support children to carry out daily tasks for themselves. They encourage children to carry their own trays to the table and return them once they have finished, reinforcing responsibility and ownership. During snack time, staff support children to peel their own fruit and pour drinks, giving them time to try independently before offering help.

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

- Leaders show some capacity for self-evaluation. They have plans to incorporate a new baby room, and are preparing for upcoming changes in early years practice. However, while leaders reflect on general aspects of provision, there is limited analysis of the curriculum's impact on children's learning, and they have not identified some weaker areas of the practice at the setting. As a result, self-evaluation is not effective in sustaining a good-quality provision and improving the quality of education.
- Leaders provide staff with professional development. However, this has not been successful in improving teaching practice and their understanding of best practices in early years. For example, recent training has focused mainly on safeguarding and health and safety, with less input on curriculum delivery or how children learn best. As a result, improvements in teaching are inconsistent and the quality of education remains variable across the setting.
- Leaders' curriculum lacks clear progression across age groups, with repeated content that inconsistently prioritises developmentally appropriate learning priorities, especially for the younger children. Leaders delegate planning discussions to room staff, but do not maintain strong oversight to ensure

learning builds sequentially. As a result, key skills and knowledge are not consistently developed across the setting, reducing potential for children's progress, especially for children who speak English as an additional language.

- Staff complete observations and have a general understanding of children's needs. However, assessment is inconsistently used to identify clear next steps or to plan how to adapt teaching. Staff's planning often focuses on group goals rather than individual progress, and some checklist assessments are unhelpful and not used meaningfully to establish what children already know, understand and can do. This means that staff's planning for learning is only partially matched to what children know and can do, which hinders their progress.
- Children enjoy the times when they can choose where to play and direct their own learning. They show higher levels of purposeful engagement and social interaction during these times, which is mostly evident during the afternoon. However, leaders and staff have organised the timetable with a focus on extended circle times and group tasks that last for prolonged periods of time. Staff frequently require children to sit and listen in large groups, regardless of their age or developmental stage, which leads to visible disengagement, especially among the youngest children.
- Leaders and staff demonstrate commitment to supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have individual plans in place, and staff work with external agencies to provide tailored support. Staff use strategies such as sensory boxes, reward charts and one-to-one times to support children.
- Children behave well and follow staff direction. Staff use visual prompts and consistent language to support expectations, such as 'good sitting' and 'good listening', during circle time. Safety is reinforced through gentle reminders, such as advising children not to lean back on chairs. These consistent strategies help children to feel secure and understand what is expected of them.
- Staff build trusting relationships with parents. Parents describe the setting as warm and welcoming, with daily communication, supportive staff and regular updates about their child's care and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
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provide targeted professional development for staff to deepen their understanding of how young children learn and to enable them to deliver high-quality, responsive teaching	30/09/2025
strengthen curriculum planning and leadership oversight to ensure learning is well-sequenced, developmentally appropriate, and tailored to the needs of individual children across all age groups, including those who speak English as an additional language	30/09/2025
use assessment more precisely to inform children's individual next steps, and adapt teaching to support each child's progress.	30/09/2025

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

- achieve an effective balance between adult-directed learning and opportunities for children to lead their own play, exploration and thinking.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2719160
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10388607
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 5
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	Noahs Ark Midlands Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2719158
Telephone number	0121 771 1604
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Noah's Ark re-registered in 2023. It operates Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 3.30pm, during term time. The provider employs 11 members of staff. Of these, four hold qualified teacher status, five hold level 3 and one holds level 2. The setting provides funded places for early education.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anne Dyoss

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and staff talked to the inspector about the curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children interacted with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual/registered individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of 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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