



Noah's Ark Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305369
Inspection date	14 November 2006
Inspector	Sharon Greener
Setting Address	Noahs Ark Nursery, West Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 4LB
Telephone number	0191 4543223
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Registered person	Noah's Ark Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark Nursery opened in March 2000. It operates from four rooms and associated facilities within self contained premises. The nursery is situated in the South Shields area of South Tyneside. The nursery is open Monday to Saturday, 51 weeks of the year, from 07.30 until 18.00. The service provided has been extended to include out of school hours care and a holiday playscheme. The out of school hours facility is open each weekday, from 07.30 until 09.00 and 15.00 until 18.00 during term-time. The holiday playscheme operates during most school holiday periods, each weekday, from 07.30 until 18.00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 62 children aged from six months to under eight years on roll. Of these, three children receive funding for nursery education. The majority of children come from the local area.

The nursery employs 14 staff. Of these, 13 staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and six members of staff are currently working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff present as very positive role models and children are able to learn the importance of adopting good personal hygiene practices through well established routines and good practice. For example, children hand wash before eating, after creative play and toileting and children clean their teeth after lunch. Staff maintain good standards of hygiene and this ensures that the facilities, resources and equipment are very clean and well maintained. For example, tables are cleaned thoroughly before and after use for meals and following creative play activities and staff follow stringent nappy changing procedures. This helps to promote children's welfare and maintain a healthy environment for them. Staff have a clear understanding of relevant policies and procedures, such as the action to be taken regarding a sick child, accidents and the administration of medication. Staff make good use of these policies and procedures and this helps to minimise the risk of cross infection and safeguards children's health.

All children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs. All children have regular opportunities to take part in physical play activities both indoors and out doors as appropriate to their age and ability. All children have access to a suitable range of equipment to help promote and enhance their physical development. For example, during outdoor play older children enjoy crawling through a tunnel, playing on the slide and kicking and throwing balls. This helps to promote and develop their gross motor skills whilst they benefit from fresh air. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that any dietary requirements their child may have are well met. The nursery actively promotes a healthy eating programme and children are offered fresh fruit and vegetables each day. Meals and snacks are nutritious and well balanced and menus are clearly displayed for parents. Older children have access to fresh drinking water and younger children and babies are offered drinks appropriately throughout the day. All parents are kept very well informed about what their child has had to eat and drink whilst at nursery. This is achieved by the verbal feedback parents receive from staff and respective parents access to their child's daily record sheet. This helps to promote children continued good health and well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Security is well maintained and staff are sufficiently vigilant regarding safety. Staff have a good enough understanding of safety procedures and implement them appropriately. For example, staff understand the action to be taken regarding a lost or uncollected child. Staff identify visitors before allowing them entry to the nursery. All visitors must sign the visitors log and wear a visitors badge for the duration of their visit and are closely supervised by staff. This helps to safeguard the children. Before the arrival of children, staff risk assess their respective playrooms each morning, using a written check sheet. They use a process of ongoing visual risk

assessment throughout the day so as to ensure that the environment, resources and equipment provided remain safe for use by the children. However, there are insufficient impact absorbing mats provided for use with large play equipment in the outdoor play area and this compromises children's safety. Nine staff are trained to give first aid. The required fire fighting equipment is in place and fire exits are kept clear. The evacuation procedure is well understood by staff and fire drills are carried out on a regular basis and a record kept. This helps to keep children safe.

Children are closely supervised by staff and are able to move around their environment independently within the constraints of safety. Children show an emerging awareness of the need to adhere to the ground rules so as to help preserve their own well-being and that of others. For example, they respond well to staff when reminded not to push when queuing to use the slide and tunnel and to use toys properly so as to prevent an accident or injury. Relevant safety equipment is provided. Staff show a satisfactory understanding of child protection procedures and all have completed relevant training. This helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well as staff tailor their admission to the nursery so as to meet their individual needs and to minimise stress. The staff create a child orientated environment using displays of children's art work, posters and photographs. Child friendly storage systems promote children's free choice of activities and encourages their independence. Staff build close relationships with the children and children are relaxed and relate warmly to staff and interact appropriately with their peers.

Children under three benefit from access to a satisfactory variety of resources and activities, including those of a sensory nature, to support and enhance their development. Early communication skills are given high priority and children respond readily to staff. Children communicate their needs as appropriate to their age or stage of development, using spoken words, gestures and facial expressions. They relate to staff in an easy manner and willingly initiate conversation. For example, a child in the two to three years-old group enjoyed completing a large floor jig-saw puzzle with a staff member and eagerly pointed to and named the different animals without any prompting. This led to a conversation about the different noises the animals made and the child confidently mimicked the sound of each animal in turn and was given lots of praise. Staff listen closely to children, talk warmly to them and give them lots of eye contact. For example, when feeding babies and very young children. This has a positive impact on children's development and achievements.

Staff working with children under three years of age have a good enough understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are well aware of and respond accordingly to children's individual needs. This is shown in the way in which staff support and encourage very young children and babies to explore their environment and the activities and toys available to them. Staff regularly monitor and record information about children's developmental progress. This information is used well by staff to enable them to provide a suitable selection of activities and learning experiences and to further progress and support children's learning and development appropriately.

Children attending the out of school hours and holiday playscheme facilities have the use of a spacious and bright playroom. They have easy access to a suitable variety of activities and resources, such as creative materials, board games, construction sets, computers and a ball pool.

Nursery Education.

Children receiving nursery education are cared for in a large playroom along with other children from the age of three years. The playroom is divided into different areas to accommodate various types of play. Each area is well laid out and well resourced. Child friendly storage systems are in place and containers are labelled to help children to select their own activities which they do with confidence. Staff take an active part in children's play and recognise children's efforts and achievements and give children lots of praise. Children are eager to share their achievements. For example, one child showed great pride when presenting staff with the birthday cake she had made using dough and drinking straws and was praised readily. This helps to promote and enhance children's confidence and is reflected in their positive self-esteem. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and staff have a good enough understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance and stepping stones. Staff acknowledge the children's varying abilities and ensure children are sufficiently well supported and challenged. This is achieved through the regular monitoring, assessment and recording of individual children's developmental progress by key workers. The assessment systems used link directly to the stepping stones. This enables staff to use the information gleaned about the children to help them to shape and inform future plans and provide a range of developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences for the children. This has a positive impact on children's learning and development.

Staff give priority to developing children's creative, mathematical and personal, social and emotional skills. Children are very confident speakers and express themselves readily. Listening skills are developing very well and children can follow simple instructions. They listen very well to staff during large group activities and generally take it in turn to speak. Children enjoy story sessions led by staff. However, children make infrequent use of the book area to make independent use of the books. This does not help support their early literacy skills. Children are beginning to recognise and name some letters, such as those in key words and their first name, and are able to link the letters to the correct letter sound. Children have regular opportunities to practise early writing skills, which are developing well. They enjoy creating pictures, draw simple shapes and use templates with increasing confidence. Some are attempting to form recognisable letters and others use shapes and lines to represent writing. Children count from one to ten with confidence and some can count beyond ten. For example, one child counted thirteen paper cake cases during a baking activity. Some children are able to recognise written numbers up to five and can point out numbers correctly on a wall chart. They are beginning to show an emerging awareness of concepts, such as shape, size, addition and subtraction. For example, children can identify and sort items according to size and shape and are able to state which group contains more or less items. Children can recognise and name primary colours and some secondary colours. They have access to a computer. However, opportunities for children to examine and explore items independently and discover how they work, live or grow are few. Children have frequent opportunities to express themselves creatively

through a broad variety of activities and media, such as sand, water, model making, painting, printing, collage, role play, singing, dancing and music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff help children to settle quickly by managing their admission to the nursery well. All children are acknowledged as individuals and their needs are met accordingly. For example, children are able to rest or sleep in keeping with their own needs and babies' individual feeding routines are maintained in keeping with the wishes of parents. All children have easy access to a satisfactory variety of resources and activities. Their independence skills are developing well as appropriate to their age or ability. Children show a positive attitude towards others and interact well with staff and peers. They are beginning to show concern for others. This is demonstrated in the way that children share resources, take turns and in the manner that older children respect the personal space of others. For example, when playing next to each other at the sand tray younger children share the tool and older children make space for others on the carpet at story time. Children's behaviour is well managed by staff that make appropriate use of suitable strategies. Children behaviour is good. They respond positively to staff and are starting to show an understanding of right and wrong.

Appropriate procedures are in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff show a suitable understanding of these and some staff have previous experience of caring for children with such needs. A satisfactory selection of resources to aid in the promotion of equal opportunity is provided. This helps to raise children's awareness of diversity. Children attending the nursery and holiday playscheme are taken on regular outings into the local community, parks and green areas. This helps to develop their awareness of the local environment and the natural world. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff recognise the importance of working closely with parents to ensure that children's needs are well met. Parents receive lots of written information, including information about the policies and procedures and the different aspects of service offered. Good use is made of notice boards and displays to share relevant information with parents. They have access to information about the activity plans, daily routines and menus. Detailed information is provided about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and is displayed clearly for the benefit of parents. Respective parents have access to their own child's personal file and developmental records. Staff ensure that parents receive information regarding their child's day, developmental progress and general events through regular verbal feedback and children's individual daily record sheets. Parents are actively encouraged to keep staff informed of any pertinent information that may impact upon the care or progress of their child. This enables staff to work in harmony with parents and in keeping with their wishes, so as to meet children's needs. Verbal feedback from parents at the time of the inspection was most positive. They commented in particular about the friendly, helpful and supportive staff, the variety of activities provided, how well their children had progressed since attending the nursery and of how they were kept well informed about their child's activities and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The required policies, procedures and record keeping systems are in place and are well presented and generally well organised. However, the information relating to the investigation of complaints lacks clarity in some areas. Staff have a good enough understanding of policies and procedures which are implemented well. The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager presents as a positive role model to staff and supports staff appropriately through a formal staff appraisal system, regular team meetings and access to relevant training. Several staff are currently working towards a higher qualification. A suitable recruitment and selection procedure is in place and new staff are appropriately inducted. Staff work well together as a team and morale is good. This has a positive impact on the standard of care the children receive and the service provided.

Staff show a good enough awareness of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework as respective to the age range for whom they care. This enables staff to provide a satisfactory selection of activities and learning experiences and ensure that children's needs are well met.

The individual developmental progress of children attending the nursery is regularly monitored, assessed and recorded by key workers. The information gleaned is used well to enable staff to plan a suitable variety of purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities. This promotes and enhances children's development and learning. Staff caring for children who attend the out of school hours and holiday playscheme provide a satisfactory range of age appropriate activities and resources. However, the system of recording the activities planned for children attending these aspect of the service is not consistent. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the provider was asked to develop record keeping systems and procedures relating to the attendance records for children and staff, children's assessments records and the supervision of persons who have not been vetted and who have contact with the children.

The required record keeping systems and procedures are in place and staff are not allowed access to children until all the required checks have been satisfactorily completed and visitors are appropriately supervised at all times. This helps to improve the care of the children and to protect them from harm.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the time of the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted which required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- site large pieces of outdoor play equipment on suitable surfaces so that children's safety is not compromised (also applies to nursery education)
- further develop the system of recording information in respect of complaints to improve clarity regarding the action taken and the response of the complainant where applicable
- further develop the system of planning and recording the activities provided for children attending the out of school hours and holiday playscheme.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further promote children's interest in books and encourage them to use books independently (also applies to care for those children aged over three years)
- further extend the opportunities for children to freely explore items so as to discover how they work and opportunities to raise their awareness of how things live and grow (also applies to care for those children aged over three years).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk