

Noah's Ark Pre School Wells

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143014
Inspection date	13 July 2007
Inspector	Michelle Tuck
Setting Address	C/O St Joseph and St Teresa's School, Lover's Walk, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2QL
Telephone number	07738 887548
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Registered person	Noahs Ark Pre-school Wells
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Noah's Ark is a Catholic pre-school situated within the grounds of St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary School in Wells Somerset. The group have sole use of the building and a small enclosed garden area, and outside log cabin. The pre-school can also use the school facilities and outside grass area and hard standing playground.

The children attending live in and around Wells. Priority is given to children from Catholic families, but children from all faiths are welcome.

The group are registered to care for 16 children between the ages of two to five years. The group supports children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities. There are currently no children attending who have English as an additional language. There are currently 31 children on roll, all of which are in receipt of funding for nursery education.

The group operate five mornings a week, 9.15 until 12 noon. There are seven members of staff, of which three hold a level three qualification. Good links have been developed with the local primary schools particularly St Joseph and St Teresa. The group receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines and general discussions. They are actively encouraged to wash their hands before snacks and after playing outside. Drinking water is readily available for children to help themselves, so they are beginning to recognise when they are thirsty. Children's health is promoted effectively because staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if an accident occurs on the premises. The records are detailed and parents sign to show they have been informed. Staff obtain written parental permission from the parents prior to administering any form of medication and comprehensive records are maintained well. Written permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice is also in place, promoting the children's good health.

Children enjoy a wide range of healthy and nutritious snacks during their time at the pre-school. They are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating, often talking about which types of food are good for them. Children's allergies, and medical needs are discussed with the parents and recorded on the children's registration forms, helping to ensure their individual needs are being met. Staff implement good hygiene procedures to help prevent the possible spread of infection. For example, all tables and surfaces are cleaned thoroughly before snack and children use disposable paper towels to dry their hands.

Children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills during indoor and outside play. Children ride wheeled toys with ease and are developing their sense of balance on the outdoor equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is warm and welcoming. Staff work hard to make the building inviting for children. They organise the equipment well in specific areas for example a book corner and role play area. Displays of children's work are around the room which helps to give children a sense of belonging. Resources are balanced, of good quality and in good condition. These are easily accessible for all children.

Children are safe as they play. The staff are vigilant and supervise children well at all times. A visitors book is used effectively to help keep children safe. Clear risk assessments are carried out both inside and outside the pre-school. Clear outings procedures are in place and parental permission is obtained before outings are undertaken. Authorised people to collect children are recorded and a password system is in place for any changes. Emergency evacuations are practised with children and recorded regularly. However, the fire log lacks detail.

Children are well protected. Staff have a clear understanding and awareness regarding safeguarding children and have completed appropriate training. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow in the event of having a concern about a child in their care. The child protection procedure is currently being updated as it does not refer to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) at present.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident, settled and very happy in their environment, having excellent relationships with their peers and with the adults who care for them. Children enjoy their time in pre-school and show high levels of interest in what they do. They are eager to learn, ask questions and are motivated to try new experiences, for example, children explore painting with different parts of their body. Children achieve well because staff have an extremely good understanding of child development and how children learn. Activities are planned to promote their individual pace of learning and as a result, they progress at a rate which suits them. Children who do not yet receive nursery education funding enjoy a full and varied curriculum which takes account of the Birth to three matters framework. Children are therefore well prepared and ready to move on to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a wide and exciting range of activities which support children in all areas of learning. Activities capture the children's interest because they offer appropriate challenges and as a result, they are constructively occupied and are making excellent progress in all areas of learning. Staff question children well which promotes their thinking skills and encourages them to offer solutions. For example, how many pieces do three crumpets have to be cut into, in order for six adults to have one piece each. Children are eager to solve this problem and quickly inform the member of staff that each crumpet needs to be cut into half. Children's progress is tracked extremely well. Regular observations confirm whether they have securely accomplished a given stepping stone and are also used to inform staff whether children are ready for the next stage in their learning. This enables staff to plan accordingly for the individual child. Children each have a book which contains samples of their creations and photographs of them taking part in the excellent wide range of activities on offer, they also show children's progress, and are a lovely record for parents to keep.

Children have opportunities to be independent, choosing what they want to do from a range of prepared activities. The children are confident communicators and have a good vocabulary. They are able to express themselves well, making their needs known and respond positively to simple instructions. For example, when asked to tidy away their toys. They are developing early writing skills, such as naming their own drawings and make lists in the role play area, which is currently a travel agents. Staff actively promote children's literacy skills through the introduction of sounds and letters such as asking children 'whose name begins with S?' and encouraging the children to draw the letter in the air with their finger. Through looking for their name label at snack time they recognise their name and are beginning to understand that print has meaning.

Children have opportunities to find out about the world around them and how things work or change, for example, they competently use the computer, following instructions about how the programme works. Children receive visits from people who work in the community such as a health visitor and they make visits to the fire station or the post office which results in them having a greater knowledge about their community. Staff plan themes and activities to raise children's awareness of diversity. For example, they invite parents to share their cultures and traditions with the children through the celebration of festivals and stories. Children learn about other countries through their role play and are learning words in different languages such as French.

Children take part in activities which promote the development of their physical skills including manipulating play dough and cutting out a varied range of materials with scissors. They enjoy using the parachute and balancing equipment and have climbing opportunities which challenge them. Children are enthusiastic about their role play, immersing themselves in their activity. For example, they recreate a beach inside, using props to role play their sea-side experiences. They enjoy a range of creative activities which enables them to use and experiment with different media such as musical instruments, materials to make three dimensional models, painting and collage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well behaved. They know what is expected of them as they have clear boundaries set by staff whom they like to please. Good behaviour is encouraged through positive role models by staff and very consistent messages about expectations. Children are praised at every opportunity, which results in high self-esteem.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are happy, confident and have a high self esteem. They learn about the wider world through activities based on festivals. They are also beginning to learn they are part of a wider community. For example, they have opportunities to visit a local restaurant, watch pizzas being made and eat them. Children are valued as individuals. Boys and girls have equal opportunities in everything they do and staff support children in their chosen activities. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. Close liaison with parents and other professionals ensure that specific needs are understood and effectively met.

Partnerships with parents is outstanding, and this contributes to consistency in the children's care and wellbeing at the pre-school. Parents receive regular information about the setting, including information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and an opportunity to meet with the staff more formally if they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Staff work very well together, supporting one another. Staff are confident of their roles and responsibilities within the group and this contributes to the effective running of each session. The staff are very conscientious, always looking for ways to improve their practice, they are happy to attend courses and workshops when available. Staff appraisals are used to ensure all training and development needs are understood and met.

All necessary documentation is in place, and well organised. Daily activities plans and an effective operational plan shows how staff are deployed within the setting, ensuring the children receive good support to encourage learning and progress. An extremely child focused approach provides a nurturing environment for the children to flourish within.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to investigate ways in which the premises can be made more accessible for all adults and children. There are physical restraints to the building, however most children and adults can gain access to the building without any difficulties.

At the last education inspection the group agreed that planning would show how children develop early writing skills. Children practise early writing skills in every day activities. Planned activities to practice writing are incorporated into the curriculum. They also agreed to give the children more access to programmable toys and develop their information technology skills. The group now have a computer which the children use on a daily basis.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that 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.

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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):

- ensure the child protection procedure refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- record more information in the fire log, for example, the time of each evacuation.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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