

# Noahs Ark Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 04/04/2011  
**Inspector** Heather Morgan

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## Description of the setting

Noah's Ark Playgroup is a committee-run group, which operates from Cullompton Baptist Church. It was first registered in 1991. The playgroup uses the main church hall, a small hall, kitchen, toilets and enclosed outside area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It provides care for up to 32 children aged between two and the end of the early years age range, at any one time. It is open during school term times on Mondays from 9.15am to 11.45am and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9.15am to 3.15pm; it is closed on Fridays. There are currently 44 children on roll. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The manager and a staff of seven work with the children, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. One member of staff holds Early Years Professional status and is currently working towards a degree in Childhood and Youth Studies. The playgroup belongs to the Pre-school Learning Alliance Quality Assurance Scheme.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff plan and implement a very diverse range of interesting and challenging activities that engage children effectively and support them in making excellent progress in their learning and development. The very high quality care that children receive is underpinned by extremely clear and comprehensive policies and procedures that are implemented effectively by a very skilled and conscientious team of staff. Children are very safe and secure at the playgroup; they settle well and enthusiastically engage in the many learning opportunities offered to them. Staff have an excellent commitment to continuous improvement and achieve this by regularly reflecting on and evaluating their practice. Overall, the very effective partnerships established with parents and other practitioners have an extremely positive impact on each child's, welfare, learning and development.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing further the procedures for working in partnership with parents to promote healthy eating, with particular reference to children's packed

lunches.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff place the utmost priority on ensuring children's safety and security. Highly effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Very clear and comprehensive policies and procedures provide a secure framework to support staff in effectively fulfilling their responsibilities in the event of any concerns. Robust and regular assessment of the premises and activities ensures that hazards are kept to a minimum. Staff monitor arrival and departure times very closely to ensure that the security of the premises is maintained at all times.

A very clear and manageable cycle of planning, observation and assessment is highly successful in enabling staff to plan activities that reflect children's current interests and build on what they already know and can do. Children's views are regularly canvassed to ensure they have opportunities to influence what activities and resources they will access each week. Staff know the children really well and engage very sensitively with their play, which helps to sustain their interest in activities and supports them in their learning. Consequently each child is making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The staff team are well-qualified and have a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children. They regularly evaluate the activities they offer and critically reflect on their practice to identify areas for development. Consequently, they are continuously reviewing and improving their practice. For example, they are considering ways to further improve the outdoor play area to provide even more learning opportunities for children. The staff also highly value the input of parents and other professionals. For example, they are making improvements to the accessibility of resources following an external assessment of the play environment and have enhanced their selection of books based on parental recommendations of stories that children enjoy at home.

There is an excellent range of very good quality resources that children access independently both indoors and outdoors. Staff are deployed very effectively to support and enhance children's learning through purposeful play activities. Staff work really hard to create a bright, welcoming, stimulating and inviting learning environment in their shared premises.

Staff pay very good attention to the different learning styles of all the children attending. For example, they provide challenging learning opportunities outdoors as well as indoors, which hugely benefits the more active children. Children who learn English as an additional language are supported extremely well, and particularly enjoy listening to stories and looking at books in both English and their home language.

The playgroup develops very effective partnerships with other professionals and local providers to enhance continuity in children's care and development. For example, their excellent relationship with local schools influences routines for children that help them to settle following transition from the playgroup to school. Overall, there is a very effective partnership with parents, who engage really well with their children's learning. They greatly value the learning journals and particularly enjoy looking at photographs and celebrating their children's

achievements with them. Access to translation and interpreting services ensures that staff promote excellent communication with parents of all children in their care. Staff work hard to ensure children develop healthy eating habits by providing parents with nutritional guidance and offering healthy drinks and snacks during the day. They now plan to participate in a local initiative to promote healthy eating by working in partnership with parents to further improve the nutritional content of children's lunches.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children develop a really good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They choose to play outdoors in the fresh air where they have excellent opportunities to run around and exercise their bodies. They notice how their bodies change when they exercise and take their coats off when they get hot or help themselves to a drink. They are very familiar with personal hygiene routines and independently wash their hands before eating. They really enjoy trying many different types of fresh fruit at snack time and are encouraged at lunch time to eat healthy foods first before enjoying their treats.

Children are very safe and secure at the playgroup. They are supported really well when they are settling in, which helps them enormously when they are first separating from their parents. They quickly become confident and independent within the group. They have a great awareness of keeping themselves safe and use equipment very carefully to avoid accidents. For example, they carefully use hammers to tap small nails into wooden shapes and are skilled at manoeuvring their wheeled toys around the outdoor play area, negotiating and avoiding obstacles successfully.

Children's behaviour is very good. They clearly enjoy the company of other children and staff, and happily engage in co-operative play. For example, they listen to each other's ideas when developing imaginative stories and incorporate these ideas into their role play. They develop a really good understanding of the importance of sharing and taking turns. Many children are able to negotiate turn-taking for themselves, for example when using the computer, they ensure that everyone has a turn using the mouse. Children who are still learning these skills are supported very sensitively by staff who are always on hand to help them find ways to play harmoniously together.

Children develop great respect for others as they access a variety of resources that promote positive images of diversity. They enjoy participating in different cultural and religious celebrations as they taste foods from around the world, enthusiastically sing songs or create imaginative artwork that symbolises the different festivals.

Children are very independent and inquisitive learners. They engage enthusiastically with the activities on offer from the moment they arrive at the playgroup. They have very clear ideas about the activities that interest them, and

freely choose whether to play indoors or outdoors. Children flourish in the lively, stimulating environment where they relish the interaction they enjoy with members of staff. This helps to sustain their interest in their chosen activities and they often concentrate for long periods of time to complete their chosen tasks.

Children participate in activities that challenge them effectively and support their individual learning needs. They love to develop imaginative role play with small groups of friends, whether dressing up indoors or turning the outdoor climbing frame into a train that takes them to the seaside. They have a secure understanding that print carries meaning and eagerly search for their name cards when they arrive at the beginning of each session. They access a range of mark-making equipment and imitate writing for a purpose during their role play. Children enjoy making models using malleable materials and a range of construction resources. They are skilled at manipulating small objects and use their developing mathematical awareness to compare the models they make. For example, they talk about making towers higher and rolling dough until it is thinner. Children use language well to describe what they are doing and to develop their play. They use descriptive words such as 'stretch' and 'sticky' to describe the dough they are making, and talk about the different techniques of stirring, whisking and mixing as they pretend to make cakes in the sand tray.

Children make the most of the wide range of play opportunities available to them to learn and practise new skills. The excellent support they receive from staff really helps them make excellent progress in all areas of their development. They are confident, inquisitive, lively and articulate, which provides a very firm foundation for their future learning.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met