

# St Paul's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY248774
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joan Isabel Madden
<b>Setting Address</b>	Marley Road, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1LY
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Pauls Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Paul's Pre-School opened in 1986 and due to a change in the registered person was re-registered in 2002. The pre-school is held in the Community Centre in the grounds of St Paul's Catholic Primary School in Poynton and serves the local community. Indoors, the accommodation consists of two rooms and a foyer; the larger of the two rooms is used for energetic play and creative activities, the smaller room for quieter activities. Outside the children are able to use both the secure playground and the large field. The management committee, who are responsible for the pre-school, have appointed a manager and a deputy manager to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group.

The pre-school is registered for 30 children from two years to five years, with the setting choosing to admit children between two and a half and five years. There are currently 47 children on roll, of these 31 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The pre-school is open term time only, five days a week from 09.00 to 15.00. A total of nine members of staff work with the children, eight of whom hold childcare qualifications. The pre-school is presently implementing the High Scope Method. It receives support from Cheshire Sure Start Early Years.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Effective hygiene procedures are followed by the staff to protect the children from illness and infection. The premises are clean and tables are wiped down with antibacterial spray before the children have snacks. The children are learning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices and follow healthy routines. They wash their hands before handling food, and as part of the toileting routine. They sit at tables to eat their snacks to avoid cross-contamination of food. Children are treated appropriately for minor injuries, as staff are qualified in first aid and there is a fully stocked first aid box. Documentation relating to accidents and medication is correctly maintained, helping to underpin sensible procedures.

Daily routines include activities to help children develop physical skills, widen their boundaries and develop a healthy lifestyle. Children are able to play out regularly in a secure, large area where they have opportunities to run around and expend energy. They develop their physical skills using good quality wheeled toys, tyres and equipment to promote their hand-eye co-ordination skills. Other activities, such as a magnetic fishing game and chalking, are also available to encourage the children to take part in outdoor activities. In the afternoons, the children experience 'in and out' play when they have the choice of playing indoors or outdoors. Children take part in physical activities indoors during inclement weather. They enjoy working with the parachute as a large group, following instructions to manoeuvre the parachute in different ways. They develop their climbing and balancing skills as they climb steps and come down the slide on the large wooden frame. Children's independence and decision making skills are developing well. They choose from a range of activities, are learning to use the bathroom independently and put on their own aprons and serve their own snack. The children are able to rest and relax in the reading area.

Nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. On inspection day they enjoy cheese, crackers and cucumbers. Children are also offered milk and water to drink at snack times. However, water is not consistently available to children at all times, hampering their appreciation of the healthy way to remain hydrated. They bring their own lunches, which seem nutritious. The children are sociable and chat to one another throughout snack and mealtimes, encouraging them to value times when they eat food. Children have their health and dietary needs met because the staff work well with parents. The dietary requirements of the children are recorded onto their personal records and staff ensure children receive the appropriate foods for their requirements.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in clean, nicely decorated and organised premises which are presentable. Display boards depicting the children's work and named pegs help them to feel a sense of belonging. Information for parents displayed in the foyer helps them to feel valued and welcome. Having the use of two rooms enables children to be grouped separately and to take part in different types of activities. In the large room, the activities are mainly physical, creative, messy and floor play. The pre-school room is used for table top activities, computer work, mark-making and role play. There is suitable furniture and equipment available to the children, enabling them to comfortably take part in activities.

The resources and equipment are well-maintained, safe and clean helping to protect the children's well-being. Toys and materials are arranged for the children making it easy for them to access resources for themselves and develop their confidence and decision making skills. Additional resources are labelled both in words and pictures in an organised way, making them inviting to the children.

There are good processes in place for helping to keep the children safe. The premises are secure and there are tight procedures for the safe collection of children. The staff have devised risk assessments and, as a routine, the premises are checked against these before the children arrive in the morning. There are regular checks carried out on the utilities and fire equipment. Children are learning about the importance of being responsible and keeping themselves safe. They are advised not to use the climbing frame with toys in their hands. They are encouraged to clean up spillages and are made aware of the importance of road safety. Children are protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if necessary. Staff have secured their knowledge of procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are secure, happy and settled and quickly become engrossed in activities that enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills. They take part in a wide range and balance of activities to promote their learning. Staff cater well for the handful of young children that are under three years. They adapt activities to make them manageable for them. At registration time the children are divided into two groups according to age. The younger children are taken into the larger room where they are supported well as they explore a good range of materials including painting, playing with sand and water, creating collages, modelling with play dough, mark-making and taking part in small world play. This allows them plenty of opportunity to settle, talk about their experiences and get to know the staff well without being overwhelmed or becoming restless. Throughout the session staff ensure they offer appropriate support to the young children new to the pre-school to help them become established. They also operate a key worker system to help the children feel secure. However, there is no system in place for observing and recording the achievements of the younger children on entry, until they move onto the Foundation Stage curriculum.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are successfully introducing the High Scope Method into the pre-school and have a secure knowledge of how to link it to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The curriculum plans identify the stepping stones the children are working towards. As a result of the newly introduced method, the children experience a more flexible environment that allows them more autonomy. This helps their confidence, independence and decision-making skills. The staff have observed that the children are more prolific, particularly in mark-making. The children are assessed in line with the Foundation Stage. Observations the staff make on the children are transferred onto assessment records that link to the stepping stones. However, they do not have an effective system in place to gain detailed overview of the completed stepping stones, in order to easily identify gaps in learning. Staff ensure the children are suitably challenged by grouping the older, more-able children together and adapting activities accordingly. Children are encouraged to take the lead and to progress at their own speed. Staff are positive and calm; they encourage and enable the

children to take part in activities. Staff promote children's learning by asking good open-ended questions and support the children well in child-initiated play.

The children are motivated, knowledgeable and confident. Their communication, language and literacy are developing well. In large group time children demonstrate that they have a wide vocabulary as they answer questions and talk about events in their lives. They learn about initial letter sounds through a set of initial sound story books. Staff also share general story books with the children, helping them to handle books and develop a range of reading skills. Through listening to stories, songs and rhymes, the children are exploring and experimenting with sounds. They are familiar with many stories and are able to join in with the repeated refrains and fill in the rhyming words. Children listen and respond to a taped listening game. The environment, such as clearly labelled coat pegs, also helps children to learn that print carries meaning. A permanent writing and drawing area enables children to discover writing and drawing as a means of communication. Children enjoy taking part in role play and dressing up, helping to develop their imaginative and language skills. As children complete puzzles, they learn how shapes fit together. The emerging pictures stimulate conversation. Jigsaws and puzzles help to promote children's counting and number recognition. Children are heard confidently counting to beyond 20. Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about numbers beyond 20 where appropriate.

The children have very good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They discover the world of farm animals during their trip to Stockley Farm. They learn animal names, where our food comes from and how animals are looked after. Following the visit, activities reflect the farmyard to consolidate the children's learning. The children play with small world farm animals and talk about their visit. They make a book recording their visit to Stockley Farm and complete farm jigsaws. Members of the community visit the pre-school, such as the lollipop lady, helping the children to understand their roles in society. The children learn to accept responsibility by tending to the plants they are growing outside. This helps them learn about the conditions plants need to flourish. The children learn how to operate a computer by completing simple programs. Children enjoy exploring and experimenting with a good range of creative materials including painting, printing, exploring textures, constructing models using a range of construction kits, play dough and equipment, drawing on pebbles and creating collage pictures. They enjoy exploring the different sounds that musical instruments make.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities and how to cater for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a very good staff to child ratio and a key worker system in operation, enabling staff to meet the children's needs more effectively. Children are very well supported in their chosen activities, enabling them to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. They are comforted if upset helping them to feel valued. At the beginning of the session, children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what they have to say, thereby boosting their self-esteem. Children raise money for charity learning about needs of others. For example, they took part in 'Barnardo's Big Toddle'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff welcome children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are aware of how to access support and guidance from relevant professionals. If staff have concerns about a child

they monitor closely and work in partnership with parents to determine correct course of action. The local authority will provide support and guidance with a plan of action if appropriate.

The positive behaviour policy is effectively implemented, with good strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. Staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour. Children are very well-behaved; they are learning there is appropriate behaviour for different situations.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents speak highly of the pre-school. They are provided with good-quality information about the setting and its provision through the display boards and the key worker system. Parents are able to view their child's assessment folder at any time.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. There is a clear management structure. The management committee have appointed a manager who is in charge of the pre-school on a day-to-day basis and they have more recently appointed a new deputy manager. This has enabled the management team to devote more time to monitoring and developing the pre-school. They are able to learn about and implement new requirements and develop the newly introduced High Scope Method. The deputy takes on particular responsibilities and is in charge one and a half days a week to allow the manager non-contact time. The managers work directly with the children and as part of the team, which enables them to continuously monitor the provision, staff and activities. Staff work well together as a team. They are positive role models and set a very professional tone. They look very smart in their uniforms and are committed, enthusiastic, consistent and calm. All staff are involved in the planning and evaluation meeting every week and in a more general meeting each half term. This ensures staff are involved in the operational planning of the pre-school. The pre-school has strong links with school, particularly with the Foundation Stage teacher. This contributes towards the children experiencing a smooth transition into school. Staff receive visits from the local authority advisors and respond quickly to any issues raised. They work closely with the parents and receive regular feedback from them regarding the provision.

Organisation is good, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Staff have a good understanding of the conditions of their registration and how to meet the standards. In the main the vetting procedures are good to ensure that children are well protected. However, health declarations or checks are not included in the process. Group sizes, a key worker system and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Generally records, policies and procedures work in practice to underpin the good care of the children, although issues have been identified with confidentiality of records. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free-play session, snacks, group discussion time, singing and story time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection there were four recommendations raised that required the staff to improve documentation and provide the children with fresh drinking water at all times. There is now a written procedure in place to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. Senior staff have a secure knowledge of how to implement the procedure. A written policy is now included on bullying and all visitors are now

recorded in the visitors' handbook. The recommendation relating to drinking water has not been fully met and is included in the main body of the report.

At the last education inspection there were four key issues raised, which required the staff to develop procedures for monitoring staff and the completion of the children's assessment booklets. They were also required to improve planning and provide the children with opportunities to understand other people's cultures and beliefs. There is now an annual appraisal carried out on the staff to identify strengths and weaknesses of the staff. From these, the training needs of the staff are identified. There are ongoing monitoring procedures to see that the assessments on the children are evidence-based and that a common criteria is used in completing assessment records. Due to changes in the organisational plan there is no longer a dedicated rising five session and, with the introduction of the High Scope Method, the setting has moved away from medium-term planning and thematic approaches. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs by learning about their different traditions and festivals, for example, Chinese New Year. This helps them gain a wider view of the world and respect the differences in people.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 complaint 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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):

- develop an effective system of observing and recording the younger children on entry
- ensure drinking water is available to children at all times
- review vetting procedure to ensure they are rigorous and ensure incident records on individual children remain confidential.

#### **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):

- develop a system to gain detailed overview of the completed stepping stones in order to easily identify gaps in learning.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)