



St Pauls Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117231
Inspection date	14 March 2007
Inspector	Anne-Marie Moyse
Setting Address	Barne Lane, St Budeaux, Plymouth, PL5 1NE
Telephone number	01752 517473
E-mail	
Registered person	St Pauls Playgroup
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?

St Paul's Pre-School is managed by a committee of parents and operates from a hall in the grounds of St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary school. This is located in St Budeaux, a residential area of Plymouth, in Devon. The group has the use of a hall, the adjoining kitchen and toilets. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, and the group use the school hall for some activities.

The pre-school is open five days each week during term time, from 09.00 to 11.30 each morning and from 12.30 to 15.00 every afternoon except Fridays. The group are planning to open a lunch club.

The group are registered to care for up to 24 children aged from two to five years. The provision currently has 48 children on roll, of whom 19 receive funding for early education. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities. The setting employs five

members of staff who are qualified with relevant childcare qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a degree in childcare. They are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have excellent opportunities to be active during their sessions. On arrival, they readily join in with the 'wake up, shake up' activity, where everyone warms up and moves to the lively music. Children follow the instructions with the staff, which results in a stimulating whole group activity to start the session. Children continue to be active, as they can climb, crawl or jump on the huge caterpillar equipment, or sit along its back and imagine going on a bus journey, singing songs as they plan their expedition. As an alternative to using the outdoor area, children relish dancing and moving to the vivacious music, using the coloured pompoms to express their dynamic actions. Following this robust exercise children notice the effect of their racing heart beat and understand the importance of being active.

Children are encouraged to be healthy by accessing drinking water throughout the session, to keep them well hydrated, especially following vigorous exercise. At snack time, they sit in social groups with the staff, and start by saying a collective Grace. The children talk about healthy foods and eat a substantial snack, such as wholemeal toast, and an excellent range of freshly prepared fruits and vegetables. Children's dietary needs are known and respected. Children are encouraged to take an active role in snack time, to further develop their learning and social skills. Children help serve each other, passing around the food, and pour their own drink of milk or water.

Staff are meticulous in their hygiene, and provide excellent role models to the children. There are clear and effective systems in place that contribute to children's health. The setting is clean and the staff work well to ensure that the shared premises is always ready for the children as they arrive. The children are encouraged to be independent in their personal hygiene and toileting, although the premises does not always make this achievable. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting and before eating, using the facilities in the toilet areas, but the soap and paper towels are not convenient to reach. After craft activities, children use a communal bowl of water in the main play room, which does not prevent cross-contamination. The staff use good hygienic procedures when changing nappies to ensure children's individual needs are met and respected. Children are exceptionally well cared for in the event of an accident and if they become ill. All staff hold appropriate training and detailed records are maintained, which are countersigned by the parents, ensuring all information is exchanged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are well cared for in the community hall where the staff work hard to establish a welcoming and stimulating environment for all. The premises are secure and resources are well organised to ensure children are able access them safely. Staff check all the equipment for

hazards when they set up the room, and clean them each week ensuring they are hygienic for all to use. The staff conduct regular risk assessments on the premises, equipment and any activities to ensure that all hazards are identified and minimised. Any damage to the building is reported quickly, and staff adapt their routine to ensure children are always protected. However, repairs are not always promptly dealt with as it is a community building.

An accurate record of who is on the premises is maintained, with visitors given a health and safety briefing on entry to the building to ensure they know what to do in the event of an emergency. This demonstrates the settings commitment to keeping everyone safe. Children are regularly involved in fire drills and are developing a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They are able to take measured risks when climbing on the large equipment, contributing to developing their own personal safety. The setting reflect on all aspects of safety and have developed their own procedure to follow should there be a nuclear accident at the local dockyard.

Children's welfare is further protected by the staff having an excellent understanding of child protection procedures and how to safeguard children's welfare. The policy and procedure has recently been reviewed, and shared with parents. This helps to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the responsibilities held by each individual and the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are greeted enthusiastically by the staff and are quickly involved in the 'wake up, shake up' activity which children readily join in with and become engrossed. This familiar routine helps children feel secure and helps children settle quickly. The afternoon session is for children under three years old, where they can build their confidence and become familiar with the setting, and the staff, in small groups. The children quickly become involved in the activities on offer, such as exploring paint. Children are encouraged to use a wide variety of tools, and their hands, to investigate what they can do with various coloured paints. They mix and squeeze the paint, watching the colours change and seeing how it moves over the tray. The staff support this play effectively, talking and offering additional resources or materials for the children to further extend their understanding of this substance. The staff ensure there are plenty of choices available, which are interesting to the children. The group use the Birth to three matters framework very well to support the younger children and introduce new play experiences for this age group. There is an excellent balance and pace to the session where children have opportunity to sit and listen to stories or to play outside on the bikes, or be involved in many of the other activities on offer.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making very rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are happy, eager and spontaneous in their play and have an excellent disposition to learning. Children are inspired and motivated by the enthusiastic staff who have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage. The staff use effective systems to constantly observe and assess children's play and learning. They use this information well in planning the next step in children learning, focusing on children's

interest and stage of development. The staff have exceptional skills in ensuring that the children are developing in all areas of learning by challenging children to think and ask questions in their play. Plans are detailed, informative and meaningful, with clear deployment of staff, which gives everyone a thorough understanding of their role within the group. As a result, the children are reassured and well organised, the session flows smoothly and with a good balance between free play and adult directed activities.

Children relish their time at the group. They are confident and lively, and capable of organising their own play and activities. Children use their mark making skills in all areas of play as they carry their own note pad and pencils around the room with them. This means that they can make their own shopping list for snack, while in the role play area, or make notes on where they are going when sitting on the back of the caterpillar on their imaginary bus journey. Children recognise their names at self registration and at snack time, and attempt to name their work independently. They are developing a fondness for books, reading them independently with their friends or sit reading together with a member of staff. Children are engrossed with the story of Goldilocks, using the props to help narrate the familiar tale. During the story, children and staff discuss the rights and wrongs of Goldilocks entering the three bears home, with children recognising the errors of this and developing their moral understanding. Children are enthralled and practise a wide variety of skills as they make paper plate faces, cutting and designing the creative materials to represent their ideas. They are encouraged to count and calculate as they select the right number of 'googly' eyes. They are absorbed as they sort and count the snap cards or arrange the farm animals into groups. Music plays an important aspect of the session where children sing songs throughout the morning. As a group they sit on the parachutes and sing the rainbow song, or dance and express themselves to the rousing taped music. Children use their imagination when playing in the 'Bank', using computers and office materials to extend their play and understanding of their own culture. Children learn about the natural world through simple activities, such as 'podding' peas or sorting different sorts of dried beans or peas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The setting have a wide variety of systems in place to ensure that children feel valued and make a positive contribution to the setting and the wider community. All children use sign language, symbols and verbal forms of communication. The group make excellent use of cue cards to inform all children of the routines and special requirements for an activity. For example, when the group need to listen at story time the staff gain children's attention by using a 'listening card', a visual prompt, which children instantly recognise and respond to positively. An individual traffic light system is used for behaviour management. This gives children a visual aid to fully comprehend the status of their unwanted behaviour. This is excellently supported by positive reinforcement to ensure that children's good behaviour is also recognised and praised. Children react well to this, they are polite and generally very well behaved.

The session is organised to encourage children in making individual choices and developing their self initiated play. As a result children become fully engaged and concentrate for substantial times on their own set tasks. For example, children sit, contemplate and use their imagination

when playing with the farm set or watch in fascination as the glue falls from the spreader onto the paper plate making a pattern, which is controlled by the child. This play is well supported by the staff who value children's exploratory processes. Children are developing an understanding for taking on responsibility, and readily take on the role of special helper of the day. This promotes children's self-esteem and confidence, as they pass around the fruit at snack time or lead the group at registration time.

Children learn about their local environment and culture through visits and activities. They play with resources that reflect positive images of other cultures and religions of the wider world. They become involved with understanding the needs of others, such as raising money by organising a coffee morning. Staff are well aware of children's differing needs and are exceptionally confident in supporting any child's learning difficulty or disability. Clear systems are in place that ensure that close links are formed with parents. This promotes all children's development and consistency of care. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that parents are able to have daily communication with the staff regarding their children's needs. A member of staff greets and speaks with the parents after the session, which gives parents opportunity to raise any incidental concerns or issues. Staff formally invite parents to sit and discuss the child's development regularly and whenever there are any concerns. Children benefit greatly from this open communication as it supports their learning both in the setting and in the home. Parents are given a wealth of information on the setting and includes extending their knowledge of what activities and themes children are involved in. Parents are fully involved in the assessment system and their knowledge is valued and utilised to help staff develop the planning of children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a generally well-organised environment by staff who provide excellent role models and work cohesively forming a strong team. The staff are very well qualified and have a commitment to extending their own development in childcare by attending further training. They relate extremely well to the children enabling them to be secure, happy and confident. The staff are well supported by an enthusiastic committee. All the required documentation is in place, well organised and maintained to a very high standard. Children's records are well documented to support their placement and development. The extensive policies and procedures, used effectively by the setting, contributes and promotes the very high standards achieved by the group.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The organisation of the nursery education is delegated to the team of staff who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are effectively lead. There are excellent systems in place for the deployment of staff and to ensure that there is constant monitoring of the provision. The group evaluate and reflect on all aspects of their practice, constantly striving for improvement.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the group agreed to: keep Ofsted informed of all changes to staff and persons connected with the setting; ensure that the heating and hot water was at appropriate temperatures; improve the documentation including policies and procedures and risk assessments on the premises; and ensure that staff were aware of the procedure for reporting significant injuries.

All these issues have been addressed and the setting have made additional improvements to the setting. The group have effective systems in place for informing Ofsted of any significant changes to the group and there is a procedure in place for the staff to follow should a serious accident occur, which requires reporting. Documentation is up to date and thoroughly maintained to ensure that all the required records are in place and ready for inspection. The heating and hot water supply has been reviewed to ensure that children are warm and can wash their hands with warm running water. The setting have robust systems in place to review all risk assessments and identify hazards so they can be minimised. These improvements have contributed to improving the quality of the setting for children.

At the previous nursery education inspection the group were required to: improve the organisation of the session to ensure staff were well deployed and that the pace of the session was improved; and to further develop the planning system and to improve the information given to parents on the provision and Foundation Stage.

The group have, and continue, to review and evaluate the organisation of the session to provide a good balance of free play and adult directed activities. The staff have clear guidance on their role and are well organised to ensure the pace of the session meets the needs of the children. The system for planning activities has been developed and now covers all areas of learning and provides clear learning intentions to help children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are now well informed about all aspects of the provision and are involved in the assessment process and how their children are progressing.

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 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 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 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):

- continue to review and develop the quality of the premises to ensure it is well maintained and organised to develop all aspects of children's wellbeing.

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