



St Pauls Second Steps Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139472
Inspection date	16 January 2007
Inspector	Juliet Eileen Hartridge
Setting Address	St Paul's Church Hall, Torquay Road, Preston, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 1DZ
Telephone number	07981 929518
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Registered person	St Pauls Second Steps Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

St Paul's Second Steps Pre-School is a well established pre-school that originally opened in the late 1960's, that operates from the premises of St Paul's Church in the Preston area of Paignton. The pre-school uses the large church hall except on Wednesdays when it operates from the nearby Scout Hut as the church hall is unavailable. It is open between 09.00 and 12.00 from Monday to Friday in term time only. The informal Early Bird session provides care for children between 9:00 and 9:30. A parent and toddler group runs from 9.30 to 11.30 alongside the pre-school on Mondays. The pre-school is registered for 26 children aged between two and five years of age. There are currently a total of 21 children on roll, of whom 17 are funded three- and four-year-olds. Two year old children attend the pre-school in the term in which they become three. All staff are qualified. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs or those who have English as an additional language. The pre-school is managed by a committee of parents and is supported by the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a clean and hygienic environment, where they learn about appropriate hygiene routines. The toilet area is fresh and clean, and the risks of cross infection are minimised as children are aware of the importance of washing their hands before they eat their snack. Their self care is encouraged as they can access the toilet area and wash their hands independently. Children readily talk about 'washing the germs off our hands', and liquid soap and individual paper towels are available. Children are well protected in an emergency as appropriate documentation is in place. This includes clear records of parental consent for emergency medical treatment to be sought as well as clearly recorded accident records. At least two members of staff have current first aid qualifications.

Children benefit from the opportunity to make healthy choices when they eat a healthy snack of a variety of well presented fresh fruit and drinks, including milk, milk shake, water or dilute squash. Children are enthusiastic fruit eaters and talk about the fruit being juicy and tasting good. The well implemented café system enables children to decide when they are ready to stop playing to eat their snack. This provides children with good opportunities to learn to assess their own appetites and to eat when they are hungry.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy exercise and develop their muscles and co-ordination when they ride on trikes and play circle games. They are learning about the benefits of exercise when they enthusiastically jump, run and touch their toes in their regular music and movement sessions. Good use is made of the field when the weather is suitable for outdoor play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in well maintained and secure premises, and although the hall is shared with a variety of users the staff work hard to create a welcoming and safe environment for children. There are some displays of children's art work and there is a comfortable and inviting book area which is well used by children throughout the session. Staff vigilantly monitor the door at the start and end of the session and the outer doors are locked. Annual recorded risk assessments are used to ensure the premises are safe, as well as daily visual checks at the start of the session, and the pre-school has public liability insurance.

There is a suitable range of toys and resources which are regularly checked when they are put away at the end of the session. Whilst there is a range of child height tables and chairs some resources are set out on adult height tables, which are hazardous for the smaller children to access safely. Children are learning about the importance of playing safely on their trikes and using the chairs properly. Children are reasonably protected from the dangers of fire, as the fire drill is displayed and practiced. However, there is no recent record of any practices.

Children are reasonably well protected from abuse as staff have a generally sound awareness of their responsibility to protect children in their care. However, staff are not secure in their understanding of whom to contact regarding any concerns. There is no information about child protection displayed, and parents do not have access to the child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive a warm welcome when they arrive at pre-school, they are happy to be there and are eager to play with their friends and choose what they want to play with during the morning. New children are helped to settle gradually. Staff are caring and understanding of their needs when they show them books and toys which particularly interest them, and chat quietly to help them feel secure. Children are secure with the familiar routine, and excitedly wait to take their turn to tell their news at circle time or willingly join in and help their friends at 'tidy up time'. Staff are warm, friendly and supportive when they talk to the children about their photos and gently encourage them to stand up confidently in front of the group to talk about their news. Children enjoy a reasonably well balanced range of activities throughout the session, however as trikes are available throughout at least half of the session, this becomes noisy and disruptive for the children who may prefer to play quietly.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and an awareness of how children learn through play; the six areas of learning are identified in the curriculum planned for the following week. Observations are made of the children's achievements and these are then recorded in the children's passport assessment records. However, there is no photographic evidence or examples of children's work to further develop this process. Staff meet each week to prepare the plans for the following week and the children's individual assessments are reviewed to ensure their needs are met when the educational provision is delivered. However, it is not clear how this process ensures that there is sufficient challenge for the more able children.

Overall, the children are making suitable progress in all areas of learning. Children are good communicators, they chat together at café time whilst they enjoy their snack, and sit and look at books together in the book area. They recognise their names when they find their names at registration and café time, and respond readily to music and movement instructions. Their creativity and imaginations are promoted when they dance or pretend to be animals to music, although there were limited opportunities for children to participate in role play during the inspection. They enthusiastically explore paint and skilfully use crayons and stencils, or make playdough ponds for their frogs. They use their small muscles when they make intricate constructions with clip together shapes, or carefully push their trains around the train track. Some children can identify the shapes they have constructed or talk about their age and demonstrate this with the appropriate number of fingers. However, there are limited opportunities for children to explore quantity or number in everyday situations and staff do not routinely count or compare regularly, which means that children's mathematical understanding or language is not being consistently developed and extended.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by a consistent staff team, who are aware of the children's interests and know the children well. The pre-school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has attended relevant training which ensures that any children attending who may have learning difficulties or disabilities have their needs met. Children are generally well behaved and respond well to the praise and encouragement which is readily given by staff. However, some children of various abilities have difficulty concentrating at circle and story time, and although staff are on hand to provide support, the enjoyment for some children is disrupted. The extended period of play on trikes also has an adverse effect on children's level of behaviour and concentration.

Children are learning to play harmoniously together, and co-operatively play with the train track or wait to take their turn at the painting easels and the café table. They learn about the importance of sharing and caring for others when they take Ted home, and eagerly listen to the diary of his exploits at their homes. Children learn about each others home lives when they share and talk about photos of their families and pets at circle time. Children have good opportunities to explore diversity when they enjoy Asian or Chinese food and celebrate ethnic festivals. They learn about their own culture when they celebrate Christmas or play traditional circle games. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the warm and friendly verbal exchanges apparent between the staff and their parents and carers, who readily exchange relevant information about their children at the start of the session. The detailed information forms ensure that children are cared for according to the wishes of their parents and carers. This ensures that the needs of their children are met. Parents and carers are able to see the curriculum planning for the week, which is displayed in the hall and include the learning intentions proposed. They also receive newsletters each term which keep them informed about the current topics and news. They have some awareness of the passport assessment system in place. However, there is currently no written information or prospectus about the pre-school provided for new parents and carers and the policies and procedures are not available on the premises for them to read. This means that they are not fully informed about how the pre-school is run and what is available for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is adequately supported by the appropriate organisation and satisfactory leadership and management of nursery education. The pre-school is managed by a committee of volunteer parents. Some evaluation of the setting takes place each year, and questionnaires are circulated to parents if any changes are proposed. Suitably qualified staff and high staff ratios ensure that children receive sufficient support and supervision in a happy and welcoming environment. Staff attend weekly staff and planning meetings, as well as occasional training events. For example a recent communication, language and literacy course provided useful and stimulating ideas which staff brought to the group to develop children's play and learning opportunities. However, there is no current formal and recorded staff appraisal system, which

means that staff skills, training needs and areas for development are not explored to their full potential to further enhance the care and education of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children benefit from being cared for in a spacious and generally well organised environment, with plenty of space for them to play and move. Use is made of other rooms when the main hall is not available, which means that sessions are available for children every morning. Children enjoy a reasonably well balanced range of activities, however as trikes are often available throughout at least half of the session, at one end of the hall, this becomes very noisy and disruptive for the children who may prefer to play quietly. It also means that some more active children are less inclined to explore the other play activities available.

Most regulatory documentation is in place and supports the safety of children. This includes registers of attendance and fire drill procedures; documentation is securely and confidentially stored. Ofsted are kept well informed regarding any management changes and staff have undergone the relevant checks. However, there is no certificate of registration displayed on the premises, which means that parents are unable to check that the setting is a registered provision. This is a breach of regulation.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous childcare inspection the pre-school was asked to make various improvements. They were asked to improve the smell emanating from the toilets in the large hall. The toilet area has now been improved and renovated and is now clean, fresh and hygienic for children to use. They were also asked to improve the security of the premises. The outer door is now locked when all children have arrived, and the door to the hall is carefully monitored by staff at the start and end of the session. The presence of all adults, children and visitors is now clearly recorded and this has all contributed to the improved safety of children.

The pre-school was asked to make some further improvements including the information provided for parents, and this was also a point raised for development at the previous nursery education inspection. Although parents have previously been given a simple prospectus, there is currently no written prospectus available about the pre-school for parents. The pre-school was also asked to develop staff knowledge of appropriate child protection procedures. This area is still in need of development.

The pre-school was also asked to ensure the accuracy of all policies and procedures. It was not possible to assess the accuracy of all information and procedures as the policies were not available during the inspection. However, the committee are intending to update the pre-school policies very shortly.

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.

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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):

- continue to develop staff's awareness of appropriate child protection procedures
- ensure that all fire drill practices are clearly recorded
- review the structure of the session to ensure that the use of wheeled toys does not dominate and disrupt the morning routine, and enable the variety of play and learning opportunities for children to be further developed
- ensure the registration certificate is displayed on the premises at all times.

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 develop the assessment and planning system to ensure that more able children receive consistent and sufficient challenges
- consider ways that evidence such as photographs and examples of children's work and achievements can be effectively and informatively used in the assessment process
- plan and provide more opportunities for children to count and solve simple everyday mathematical problems and develop their mathematical language as part of the daily routine.

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