

# St Paul's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301850
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 June 2007
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 outstanding. 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 privately owned and has been registered since 1995. The pre-school is situated in a mobile unit within the grounds of St Paul's Roman Catholic First School in Cramlington, Northumberland and also has access to the school hall and an adjacent playground which is shared with the school's Early Years Unit.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15 term-time only. The pre-school offers sessional care for children from the local and wider community. It is registered to care for a maximum of 23 children aged three to five years. There are currently 45 children on the register, of whom 31 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The manager and five staff members work with the children on a rota basis. Four of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school has close links with the First School. Support is received from the school's reception teacher through the Local Authority Qualified Teacher Support Scheme.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a thoroughly clean and healthy environment. Staff robustly maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene that minimise risks of cross infection and contamination successfully. Children gain very good awareness of hygiene and personal care through staff's excellent support and guidance, for example, they instil in the children the importance of wiping tables before snack, using tissues and gentle reminders to putting a hand over the mouth when coughing. Children learn very good hygiene practices within everyday routines, they independently access the toilet and hand washing facilities and use liquid soap and paper towels successfully. The experienced adult support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Staff hold current first aid certificates which are renewed as part of a rolling programme. The clear, detailed and accessible health and safety policy, together with the staff's extensive knowledge and experience, ensure children are protected from infection very well.

Children competently use a dispenser which is available in the pre-school room and freely access drinking water throughout the session. This encourages the children to use their initiative and promotes independence. The children and staff sit together during snack and meal times. The staff are very aware of the potential excellent learning opportunities during these times and talk with the children about the benefits of healthy food. One of the core values of the setting is to be courteous to one another; this is emphasised extremely well during meal times where the children say 'please' and 'thank you' with very little prompting from adults. The children are encouraged, when they are able to pour their own drinks and prepare fruit for snack time. Children are totally involved with the preparation of food; the monitor for the day collates the required amount of fruit that has been selected by the children or with help from an adult will visit the local shop to purchase the produce to prepare a more substantial snack. This approach greatly enhances children's understanding, enjoyment and willingness to eat healthy foods. Support for the children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle is very good and the children are becoming aware of what is 'good for them.'

Children constantly develop and test their physical skills through taking part in stimulating, vigorous daily indoor and outdoor play. Physical play is planned carefully as part of the commendable range of activities. Challenging resources cater very well for children's individual needs. For example, the adventure playground offers various balancing beams, chain bridge and stepping logs. Here all children can enjoy learning to balance and achieve success according to their own competence. Children develop a very positive attitude towards physical exercise which is provided by dedicated staff who enthusiastically join in their games. Staff and children start the session with an exercise song which the children participate with vigour and enjoyment. The whole approach to a healthy lifestyle is positively reinforced as staff praise children who have arrived at the pre-school using their bikes and scooters. The staff hold dance and write sessions which helps to develop children's gross motor skills very effectively. For example, using their bodies the children are encouraged to use their inventiveness to create volcanoes or animal movements using exaggerated arm and body movements. Children manipulate play dough as they create African bowls, they use paintbrushes and pencils with growing competence and absolute enthusiasm. Excellent opportunities, such as these allow the children to develop their fine motor skills and assist the development of hand and eye co-ordination.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are kept safe in welcoming premises that are secure at all times. There are effective procedures in place to ensure visitors to the setting are closely vetted and supervised. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are only allowed to go home with a designated person. Risk of accidental injury to children is effectively minimised because staff are well trained, extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Children are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, they practise emergency evacuation regularly and they are also taken out to visit local shops ensuring they are competent at using road safety crossings. They are reminded to walk, not run indoors and staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as why children should pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall and hurt themselves. Children are efficient at clearing up after themselves which is promoted by the excellent use of music and well timed verbal notification from staff. This helps them to understand that good habits make a positive difference and encourages them to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being. Risk assessments are completed for the building and all activities, for example, how the children are kept safe when they go for walks locally. Staff are committed to ensuring children are very well looked after and are vigilant in supervising them.

Children enjoy using the vast range of extremely good quality resources and equipment available to them. Staff think carefully about which resources to set out ready for the children each day, choosing those which will appeal and excite and invite them to participate in the activities. Toys and play materials are presented at low level for the children and they are encouraged to use them freely, to develop their independence and self-esteem.

Child protection procedures are robust and widely understood. As a result, children are safe and secure. Staff have attended training and appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Senior staff take a lead role for child protection and all staff are fully aware of the types of abuse and the signs to look for.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very enthusiastic about learning and arrive at nursery each morning keen to explore the very wide range of activities provided. The day begins when they eagerly and happily announce their arrival with a 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' and find their names to insert their sticker on their special card. These well-established routines enable children to feel secure and develop a true sense of belonging. Within this atmosphere, their self-esteem, confidence and capacity to work together develop very successfully.

Children gain high self-esteem through carefully planned encouragement to become independent, make choices and take on responsibilities. They learn quickly to share, take turns and work together because these opportunities are integrated into their learning experiences. All children are confident and secure in the group and respond well to all the staff, displaying great affection for them, which is appropriately returned by staff. The atmosphere is very industrious and children show an eagerness that bubbles over into all their activities. When they choose their own activities all the children occupy themselves very productively, many concentrate for a long time, playing quietly and chatting with their friends. All children behave exceptionally well and have very good manners.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff display great skill supporting children in their play, extending their learning effectively, or standing back, allowing children to concentrate and persevere. Children benefit from the very secure understanding and knowledge staff have of the Foundation Stage. This is evident in the comprehensive planning which covers all the areas of learning, and the staff's consistent understanding of what children are learning from play and activities. Staff have the confidence to allow children to try things out for themselves and they know exactly when to intervene in order to extend learning. Questions are pitched at exactly the right level to ensure that all children are involved and able to make good or very good progress. The staff recognise that children learn in different ways and plan meticulously to meet individual needs. Staff follow a strong philosophy that children learn most successfully when they are encouraged to follow their interests. As a result, the curriculum is planned to be flexible, so it is able to respond to the child's interests or to particular events, such as moving to a new part of the school.

Assessment procedures are very comprehensive and ensure that staff are fully aware of each child's progress. This information is used very effectively to influence the next steps in learning for each child. Planning for children's learning is very detailed, ensuring that all areas of learning are fully covered and providing a good balance between adult-led and child initiated activities. Between the focused sessions, whilst children explore very high quality free choice activities, all staff work with one or two children at a time moving their learning forward and recording what they know and can do. Staff make very good use of the assessments to plan activities that match children's maturity and provide sufficient challenge for their varying abilities; this is clearly demonstrated in the range of homework that is provided to the children. There is a very good balance between adult-led activities and free-choice activities and so children remain motivated and enjoy their learning.

Children are keen to do well because they are enthused by the wide range of activities on offer. Staff are well aware of how such young children learn and use every opportunity to develop their basic skills. For example, staff are very precise in their pronunciations of letter sounds and so children make rapid progress in their speech. Children with learning difficulties are provided with very effective support, enabling them to make progress at the same rate as other children. Their behaviour is consistently good and they are very independent. They are confident and make sensible decisions about what they are going to do and quickly become absorbed in their work. Speaking and listening skills are a priority and children speak confidently telling their news to the group and are learning to be considerate when listening to others. They work very well together and on their own, maintaining high levels of concentration because the activities are so exciting.

Children eagerly participate in well-organised circle times, for example, they take great pleasure in counting the children and adults present and also add to the core skills that they are reminded of each day, such as listening, concentration and talking. Staff have high expectations of what children will achieve. They use number rhymes and sequencing songs effectively to help children learn to count and understand pattern. Children discuss numbers confidently and learn to recognise numerals. They develop a clear understanding of one-to-one correspondence as they fill in charts to show the number of children present. Children enjoy interactive experiences and learn well through trial and error and constant practice. For example, children experimented with different objects to find out whether they would roll or slide down the ramp. Children began to draw from their own experiences and looked eagerly for a car as they distinctively knew the car would roll because it 'has round wheels'. During water play children learn

comparative language, such as 'full, empty' or 'holds more than' as they enjoy pouring water from one bucket to another.

Children walk around the immediate area to become more aware of their environment. Learning is also brought to life by a range of visitors, such as the local nurse and fire brigade. Activities, such as the composting of waste and learning how to buy food at the local shop, as well as the secure basic skills that they develop, prepare them well for the next stage of their education and for later life. The creation of the butterfly garden and ladybird house encourages children to investigate their surrounding and ask questions about the life cycle of the little creatures. The children understand how to turn on the tape recorder and how to follow a computer program. They show natural care for living things, for example, after planting their flowers and herbs outside they know that the plants need water. Children select materials independently when making models. They successfully and competently join materials effectively and know how to use a range of tools safely. Children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs are very well developed through their participation in fundraising and through stories, such as 'Handa's Surprise'.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff know the children extremely well and immediately go to any child who looks unsure or unhappy. Children are highly valued and treated with great consideration. They trust and like the adults they work with and feel completely confident and secure within their environment. Opportunities for children to celebrate major festivals, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year, enhance children's understanding of diversity well. Learning about Africa, and raising funds for a school in Madagascar develops children's appreciation and respect for other cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have realistic and consistent expectations and provide very positive role models. They plan a very wide range of stimulating play opportunities giving children meaningful choices. Consequently, children are fully engaged in purposeful, satisfying play experiences and their behaviour is exceptionally good.

Children are learning to be kind and sensitive to each other, for example, each child draws a picture to create a get well card for their friend who is in hospital. From the moment children step inside the pre-school they are enveloped in a warm, secure and safe environment. Staff respond immediately to any signs of uncertainty, for example, a younger child became distressed when older children were going on a visit to their reception class. Staff immediately altered plans to enable the child to make a visit with her older peers.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Staff involve parents as key partners in their children's learning and forge strong relationships with them. Parents receive clear information about the setting and the education offered before children attend. There are calm and unrushed opportunities to exchange information everyday. Parents justifiably lavish praise on the pre-school for the exceptional way it cares for individuals. They value the fact that the pre-school works in partnership with them and fully includes them in helping the pre-school provide the best care it can. Staff share the records they keep on children's progress with their parents. They build a folder of each child's work which children take with them when they leave. Parents value the high quality of care and education their children receive.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The manager has a clear vision for the pre-school, aiming to provide a first class service which meets the needs of all the children who attend. She has a clear understanding of her responsibilities and organises all business matters effectively. All the required documentation to support children's welfare is in place. Children develop very well, have lots of fun and learn rapidly with the excellent care and the quality and range of activities offered. The high staffing level and high level of staff commitment results in a better level of support for the personal development of individual children.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The manager leads with flair and imagination, and her inspiring personal example is mirrored in the work of her staff. The manager's particularly high expectations of the staff's expertise and of how children should be treated, places children's personal development and well-being alongside achievement as a constant focus for all children. The pre-school conducts extremely thorough evaluations of its quality and effectiveness and the manager knows exactly what is going on and what needs attention. Evaluations to maintain and improve the quality of care and learning have resulted in all staff providing excellent learning opportunities for children. All members of staff are involved in frequent training and in thinking carefully about what the pre-school could do to be even more successful. 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 the pre-school was asked to ensure that the outdoor play area is secure and to update the child protection policies. The staff always check the outdoor area prior to children using this space. They pay particular attention to the gates and ensure all external gates are locked and the internal gate is secured. Children are constantly supervised whilst outdoors. Child protection policies have been updated and are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. These improvements ensure children's overall safety and well-being.

## **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.

## **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 outstanding. 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**

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

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