



St Paul's Walden Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY293964
Inspection date 18 July 2005
Inspector Carol Mansell

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Telephone number 01438 871813
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Registered person St Paul's Waldon Pre-School ltd
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

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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 Waldon Pre-School opened in 2004 and operates from one classroom in the local Primary School in a village near to Hitchin in Hertfordshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the Pre-School at any one time. The Pre-School operates Monday, Thursday and Friday from 09.00 to 12.00 and Tuesday and Wednesday between 09.00 and 15.30 term time only. The group also runs a lunch club from 12.00 to 13.00 each day. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play

area.

There are currently 34 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mainly come from the local area. The Pre-School currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The Pre-School employs seven staff and a temporary member of staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification. The Pre-School also has an administrator and is committee run. They have support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Young in Herts. development team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children confidently use the outdoor area where they are able to challenge themselves and are given sufficient time to use a wide range of equipment. Additional support is offered to children who lack the confidence, or abilities, allowing them to access the activities at an appropriate level. Children enthusiastically join in with indoor physical activities, such as, music and movement with visiting musicians who work with the children on a weekly basis. The children's obvious joy and pleasure is demonstrated by the way they eagerly sit, listen and join in with the songs and actions. They move about the setting confidently and are careful of younger children within the group who are given extra support by staff. Children recognise the need for a drink after they have been moving vigorously.

Some children are extremely confident in balancing on the sand cover and are able to proceed along the adjacent beams safely. Staff allow the children time to practise and persevere with their skills, and the equipment available enhances these experiences for them. Children show a clear understanding of the need to wear hats in the sun. They recognise that there is a large shaded area and know that they can play safely under here without their hats.

Children's health is well promoted with healthy snacks being available at snack time. The children are learning about being healthy as they bring contributions for snack time and staff discuss why they are an important part of the children's diet and why exercise is also important. Staff support the children at the lunch club and allow them to eat at their own pace offering praise and encouragement to those who have additional needs at this time. Some staff members have attended appropriate training courses to ensure they are developing good practice with health and hygiene which is helping the children to stay healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children boldly explore the outdoor area in line with their development. They take acceptable risks and challenge themselves. An example of this was one of the younger children who having slid down the slide then proceeded to do a forward role, explaining "I doing a roly poly". He was aware of where other children were, even waiting before having his next turn to ensure the previous child had moved and it was safe to have his go.

Staff are mostly supporting children's safety and well-being, they have safe collection procedures in place that are understood by the parents and these appear to work well. The children understand the procedures when the older children from the school are moving through the outside area. They stop their games and move to the edge of the pathway and gateway to see their older siblings and friends. A designated member of staff stands near the open gateway to ensure children do not leave the premises unsupervised. Children understand that this is to protect them from harm. However, as the outdoor area has potential hazards from slopes and steps as well as being on two sides of the building; staff are not always aware of where the children are and therefore do not rigorously manage this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well settled in the group and enjoy playing with the resources and activities available. Children relate well to each other and socialise together seeking out friends to share activities. Most children spend their time in a purposeful manner as they freely move around the activities throughout the session. All children are animated when joining in with the music sessions, confidently singing the songs and moving around the space, for example when being frogs and butterflies.

Children show great enjoyment and imagination when playing in the 'jungle area'. They use the binoculars to search for the different creatures and use descriptive language when explaining to adults what they are doing and what they have found. Children play collaboratively in the home corner, when baking one child explains to another 'no, you need to put some water in it'. 'No, that's too much!' She then goes on to ask 'Right now get me some clothes.' She proceeds to iron the bed cover, then throws it on the floor declaring 'All done'.

Children display their own work proudly. Many use the resources available well in a variety of adult and child initiated activities. However, children under 3 years have little opportunity to become autonomous learners and they do not have a quiet area to rest if required. Staff plan a range of activities but have little understand of guidance such as 'Birth to three matters', to promote children's development consistently. Consequently, the young children can be disruptive and show little interest in developing their own ideas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are beginning to make progress and this is aided by three key members of staff who have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. They plan

a varied programme and maintain records on some of the children. However, as not all staff members are involved in the planning and assessment process and some have little understanding of the Foundation Stage they are not able to fully understand the learning intentions of each activity.

Children are beginning to care for and about others, showing sympathy to those who cry after tumbling over whilst playing in the outdoor area. Most of the children are learning to take turns and they are supported by the staff who value the children's work and provide wall space for them to display their own work, this is helping them to gain confidence and improve their self-esteem.

Staff are helping the children to communicate their needs, wants and desires. They support the children at snack time. This is a very sociable time and children are growing in confidence with talking to their group. The children celebrate each other's birthdays and those of the staff. They have included a few celebrations from other cultures in the activities available to the children. Children are given many opportunities to extend their thinking and some are beginning to negotiate with others when playing in the home corner or in the outside area. Staff assist this if needed. Children have many opportunities to initiate conversation and they are learning to give others the opportunity to speak as well. This is helping them to build relationships.

Children enjoy the familiar counting rhymes used in the pre-school, they are starting to use numbers in context and many are beginning to recognise the numbers 1 to 5, with others now able to move on to 1 to 9. Some children know their age, stating that 'I'm 4, soon I'll be 5'. Staff are beginning to move the children towards new concepts such as, bigger, smaller, over, under and on. However, the opportunities to introduce some mathematical concepts are missed, particularly when organising the tables for snack time. Children are not given opportunities to calculate, for example, whether there are enough plates, cups or chairs.

Children enjoy exploring textures and materials. They move snakes from the jungle area and introduce them as an extension of their playdough activity. Rolling the dough flat they experiment by pushing the snakes into the dough. They use descriptive words to express how it feels 'squidgy and sticky'. They also examine the patterns left by the snake; they run their fingers over the belly of the plastic snake and then over the pattern in the dough, recognising that they feel the same 'bumpy'. When mixing paints they are beginning to question why and how the colours change. With the support of a parent helper the children are beginning to experience ICT (Information and Communication Technology), using the computer when she visits once a week. The children involved with the junk modelling are able to explore ways to ensure their creations stayed together, using glue and tape. They seek assistance from the member of staff supervising the activity if required.

Staff do not use a clear key worker system and this limits the children's sense of belonging within the group. Staff are actively involved with the children and engage them in conversation. However, the children do not have opportunities to share their work or talk about significant things that have happened to them which would aid their feelings of belonging and self-assuredness. Although children do celebrate each other's birthdays and a few other celebrations from other cultures their understanding

of difference and diversity is limited. However, plans are in place to extend this type of activity next term.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children mainly behave well, they know what is expected of them and this is reinforced by the staff helping to raise the children's self-esteem. They are beginning to recognise when other children are upset or hurt and show care for their well-being. Sometimes there are behaviour issues with children with special needs, but the other children are aware of this and make allowances, this is helping them to begin learning about diversity. However, there is a lack of resources and displays to reflect difference which hinders the children from gaining an even better understanding of the wider community. Staff have taken the first steps to tentatively foster the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective systems are implemented to support children with any special needs.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. It is encouraged by the use of a notice board, newsletters and 'What I can do' books which are completed at home by parents and children who are in receipt of Nursery Education. Staff do not have this sort of information from parents regarding the younger children. Some parents receive information about their children, but comments from parents reveal that they wish to know more about their children's progress and how to enhance their learning at home to help their progress in the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children with special needs are provided with additional support as the leadership ensures a high number of staff are employed to care for the children. Staff work well together to provide a friendly, approachable team of adults for the children to interact with and seek extra support when needed. Children are aware of key points within the routine, such as, recognising the signal for them to tidy up. They know where the resources are stored and access the storage spaces with the help of the staff.

Most of the documentation required is in place; however, there have been a few omissions, such as a record of any medication administered by staff and a lost child procedure, but staff are reviewing all their policies and procedures at present and these omissions will be addressed. Planning and assessment systems are not systematic so some staff members have very little understanding about children's achievements and progression.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Both leaders and the deputy work well as a group. They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and how this will benefit the children and aid their learning. They plan the activities and keep clear records of the children's development and know what their learning intentions are. However, a lack of communication with the rest of the staff means that

they have not worked together to develop a coherent and well-understood policy for children's play and learning or partnership with parents. As a result the progress in the different age groups is inconsistent. This means that overall the needs of the children are not being fully met. Staff are encouraged to access training to further extend their skills and improve their practice to enhance the opportunities offered to the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted have not received any complaints about this provider.

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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):

- ensure the needs of all children attending the pre-school are met by increasing the staff's knowledge and understanding of the National Standards, Foundation Stage and other relevant literature, such as 'Birth to 3 matters' framework (care and education)

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):

- introduce a rigorous and systematic assessment and observation programme and use this to inform planning and help children to progress and allow parents to be actively involved in their children's learning
- ensure children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and

understanding of the world, extend their mathematical thinking and enhance their independence skills.

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