

St Pauls Christian Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 128485 |
| Inspection date | 26 September 2007 |
| Inspector | Angela Jackson |
| Setting Address | St Pauls Church Hall, Chigwell Road, Woodford Bridge, Essex, IG8 8BT |
| Telephone number | 020 8504 5465 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | The Committee of St Pauls Christian Playgroup |
| 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Paul's Christian pre-school opened in 1993 and operates from St Paul's church hall, Woodford Bridge, in the London borough of Redbridge. Children play in the two main halls with a smaller room set aside for quieter activities. Children have access to a small outside play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The pre school is open each weekday from 9.15 am to 12 noon, term time only. There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. They employ 11 staff. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre school is affiliated to the Pre school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the high standards of hygiene and cleanliness set by staff. There are good routines in place for cleaning the premises each day and staff regularly wipe over kitchen

work surfaces and tables with anti-bacterial spray. Children are learning to understand how their body works and to understand why they have to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

Appropriate documentation is in place to support children's well-being. There are highly effective systems to ensure all staff are kept fully informed of individual children's needs and preferences and most staff have received training in how to use an epi-pen. Medication is not normally given as parents are aware that, in order to minimise the risk of cross infection, children who are ill are expected to be kept at home. Children have immediate access to treatment in the event of injury as there are always at least two staff with a first aid qualification present and the well equipped first aid box is kept close to hand. The accident report form provides appropriate information about injuries sustained and parents or carers are asked to sign to acknowledge the treatment given. Parents keep a tear off slip on the bottom of the form. When children are collected by childminders or other authorised adults, that person is asked to sign the accident record. Occasionally this is refused and arrangements are then made for parents to be sent a note which they are asked to acknowledge. Children are provided with fruit and other healthy options such as crackers and cheese, for the mid session break. They enjoy helping to prepare the foods such as picking the stalks off grapes and spreading the butter and benefit from the experience of sharing, helping others and social interaction. They have milk or water offered at snack time as well as having access to fresh water throughout the session.

Space is used effectively to provide a good range of opportunities for children to run, climb and play on bikes and scooters. There is a small outside space that children access in all weathers although care is taken when it is wet as the decking becomes slippery. The small hall is set up with role play activities such as posting letters and road safety. These incorporate the larger toys such as the climbing frame and bikes giving children's physical exercise an added dimension. Children enjoy the fun and excitement of playing games in a large group such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf'. They count out loud together as they take steps forward before running to escape. Children use small tools such as paint brushes, pencils and scissors with accuracy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where staff organise a wide range of age appropriate activities and resources to provide for their needs. Staff work with parents to make sure that children settle in quickly and feel confident and comfortable in the setting. Parents are invited to stay for at least two sessions with children and then for as long as they feel is necessary for their peace of mind. The halls are set up in an inviting way so as to promote interest and with sufficient space between the tables and activities to enable children to move around safely and freely. Toys and equipment are kept clean and well maintained and are made from a variety of materials. Risk assessments and checks are carried out regularly and are used effectively to minimise risk of injury or accidents.

Parents and carers bring children into the small hall for the start of the session. Most arrive early and can chat and look at books, toys and notices before staff open the door of the main hall where children are registered as they enter. This enables parents to see children right in safely and to say goodbye in comfort and without rush, helping children to adjust and to go off happily with their friends to play. After parents leave the main door is locked and from then until the end of the session, entry is only possible by ringing the door bell and staff giving access. At the end of the session children are gathered into the main hall and parents let into the small hall where they stand in line waiting for the door to open. Children are called in turn

to go to parents. Staff stand at each door, including the main exit, to prevent children leaving unaccompanied. However, the small hall becomes very busy at this time and children and parents occasionally lose sight of each other. Staff are vigilant and aware of the difficulties but, in the confusion, children, especially new or younger children, sometimes become distressed. Parents and carers usually verbally inform staff when someone else is going to collect their child and there is a code word system used. Written, formal, permission, giving details on a daily basis, ensures all adults concerned are aware of their responsibilities.

Children are taken out in pairs, on a rota basis, to visit local shops to buy items for the morning snacks. Risk assessments are carried out, and permission requested from parents, beforehand. Children are closely supervised throughout visits and remain with staff at all times. During these trips children get the opportunity to practise how to keep themselves safe on the roads using the road safety rules they learn within the curriculum. This helps them to take care of themselves and others. Parents comment that children tell them how to cross roads. Children's understanding of other hazards and how to cope with them are further promoted as they learn about the danger of fire. They take part in a fire evacuation drill once a term.

Children's well-being is appropriately safeguarded. Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and receive instruction as part of their initial induction. In a staff meeting at the end of the summer term, staff reviewed the policy and identified areas for improvement. Procedures and appropriate telephone contacts are now updated. All staff are appropriately vetted and are aware of their responsibility to ensure no adult without up to date cleared suitability checks, is left alone with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are brought by parents, right into the building, to wait for opening time. This small hall is set up to provide excellent opportunities for parents to support children's learning and gain full enjoyment of a wide range of equipment and activities. Children and parents look for the correct name label to post into the red post box set up to reinforce recognition of names and letters and to support the process of setting up snack time. They browse books they can borrow, and read and discuss information posters about the coming week's plans. This encourages children's self assurance as they see their time in pre-school as having purpose and of being of value. Once the doors are opened, children are warmly greeted by staff who are extremely well prepared and organised. Children feel comfortable and freely make choices about what they want to do. The activities provide balance and challenge. At each activity station there are guidelines for staff and parents about the expected learning outcome of that area and how best to promote it. This is a constant reminder to all about why and how to progress children's development and ensure the best outcomes for children.

Staff are dedicated and proactive in presenting new ideas for play and use children's individual experiences and interests as a means to promote understanding of new situations. For example, when children have a new baby brother or sister staff set up the home corner with baths and towels so that children learn how to take care of new babies and to bath them. Similarly, when children or family, have to go into hospital, role play and stories are used to help children understand the situation and to express and come to terms with their emotions.

'Take home Teddy' is a great favourite with children who listen with real interest as they learn about the lives of others. Teddy's diary is read out and photographs shown of Teddy in arm bands ready to be taken swimming. Opportunity to work as part of a larger group and learn

about collective responsibility and social skills, is provided during the big tidy up at the end of free play time. Children and staff move about purposefully, sorting, tidying, sweeping until a large area is cleared and children and staff come together in a group game. They use a diverse range of musical instruments including rain makers and triangles, to listen to, and correctly identify, the different sounds each one makes. Children listen as they each take it in turns to make a sound for the others to guess the instrument. Another successful game is the parachute that is used to considerable effect not only as an item to promote physical play but used creatively by staff to act out imaginative scenes and stories that children follow with interest.

Music and song are strong characteristics of the pre-school and children eagerly join in with staff's impromptu, as well as planned, singing. Children watch and learn from the excellent role models set by staff and confidently express their emotions in song as they use the karaoke machine, tape player and instruments to accompany them as they recite or sing, nursery rhymes and other popular tunes. Children's individual needs are taken into account and staff recognise young children's competence and appreciate their efforts to participate. Children are listened to, and encouraged, by staff who are interested in them as individuals. This gives children confidence to try new things for themselves as well as to help others.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff ensure that all children are gainfully employed in playing and learning throughout the session. Children enthusiastically offer suggestions and opinions on a wide variety of topics, stimulated by both open and closed questioning by staff. Staff interact extremely well with children and have very good relationships with them. Children are confident and keen to try new experiences such as using the new laptop for the first time. Children's previous experience and knowledge of new technology is recognised and appreciated by staff. The programs are used to extend children's vocabulary and number skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the natural world such as how far big and small puffs of wind are likely to blow a sailing boat towards the harbour. Children's understanding of how their bodies are made and used appropriately in a social context is consistently reinforced by staff's simple yet effective strategies. For example, as children roll out play dough, they are shown how to cut round the shape of each hand, discussion follows about left and right and then staff pick up one hand to shake it gently and say 'how do you do?'.

Staff are professional and thorough and pull together as a team to make best use of their own strengths and areas of interest, for the benefit of children. They spend a considerable amount of time each week discussing long, medium and short term plans. Long and medium term plans are comprehensive and innovative with activities planned to take into account all areas of learning. Key workers have excellent knowledge and understanding of the progress individual children make and ways to progress them further. Observations and assessments are evaluated and 'next steps' identified and used to inform the short term plans. Children work at their own pace with staff adapting plans and activities to extend and provide challenges appropriate to individual learning styles.

Children learn about the every day world around them through role play activities. These are set up in various areas of the hall as well as in the home corner. For example, when the home corner is set up as a hospital, children eagerly bandage staff, apply plasters and listen to heart beats through stethoscopes. This learning is extended to widen vocabulary and to use mark making for different purposes as children make appointments for patients using telephones and pencils and diary sheets, at the reception window. Staff develop the role play by engaging

children's interest and participation as they make calls, using a mobile telephone, outside the hospital building, to inform family members of what is going on. At the same time, a different role play area is organised as an office. Here children make telephone calls, use a computer, calculator and fill in forms and envelopes gaining further insight into using marks for meaning and a range of purposes.

Magnetic whiteboards and laminated pictures, words and numbers are used imaginatively and in a variety of ways. For example, a whiteboard has five large, individual, cut out iced buns set out in a line with a picture of a penny under each one. A tape is used to accompany children and staff in singing 'five currant buns in a baker's shop'. Children add and subtract buns and pennies as they sing the song together. This resourceful use of music and pictures helps children's mathematical development in a creative and enjoyable way.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The playgroup is supported by St. Paul's Church and its ethos is to offer 'Christian values and guidance to the young'. Children of other faiths are welcomed although, as a Christian Playgroup, there is a strong commitment to enable children 'to experience God's loving care for each individual' through 'respect for each individual's freedom and dignity'. Visits are made to the Church on occasions such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest time and children learn about the Christian faith. However, the admissions policy and equal opportunities policy are both very clear in their intention to promote inclusive practice. Children take part in many activities over the year that provide insight and understanding of the lives of others. They celebrate festivals and traditions of other faiths and try out different foods from across the world. There is an extensive range of toys and equipment, including dolls, small world people, books and pictures, that reflect positive images of the local community. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator who has undertaken appropriate training and has experience of, the identification and management of a diverse range of special needs. Children benefit as she works with other professionals and parents to plan and provide for individual need at an early stage. Children play well together. They share and take turns and encourage each other to join in games they are setting up. At snack time they demonstrate good social skills as they sit around the table, chatting and serving each other. Staff set high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models as they treat each other and children with equal respect. Children learn from this and from the consistently applied positive behaviour management strategies that are used such as praise, encouragement, distraction and explanation. Parents are encouraged to support the staff in all aspects of the setting and comments such as 'it's brilliant here' demonstrate appreciation as they work together for the benefit of children.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is outstanding. They are provided with high quality information at the outset and updated on children's progress informally on a day to day basis. There is a three week cycle of meetings when parents can discuss issues, concerns, or future plans with staff, over coffee. At the end of term there is usually a concert or event planned in which children take a part and parents are invited to attend. At the end of this parents are welcome to chat with staff. In addition to these face to face meetings, parents are provided with newsletters and there are notice boards and displays of work for them to look at to see what children are going to do or have done. Parents and children enthusiastically make use of the book and toy lending library. For a small donation,

parents and children make choices from a wide selection of books, including reference books for parents about child development, and toy sacks. A typical sack includes one or two books; an audio tape or CD; puzzles; games; pictures to colour in; and toys such as model animals. This provides interest for children and involves parents as they investigate, explore and learn about, the new resources together.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit as a result of the excellent organisational skills of the manager who is supported by enthusiastic staff committed to providing the highest standard of care and education for children. High regard is given to children's safety and well being reflected in rigorous recruitment procedures, appropriate and thorough vetting systems and the high adult:child ratios maintained at all times. All staff are actively encouraged to continue their professional development and supported to attend workshops and training in particular areas of interest and responsibility. Whole staff training days are planned to ensure that all staff benefit from sharing knowledge and skills learnt through training and that staff knowledge is current and in line with new guidance. All required written information is clear and detailed; it is current and stored with an awareness of confidentiality. Consequently, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. Senior staff meet once a week to review and evaluate the week's work and to prepare and plan for the week ahead. They rigorously look at their own practice and ways to improve the outcomes for children. Planning takes into account the individual needs, abilities and learning styles of children with previous attainment noted and 'Next Steps' identified. This ensures all children are making progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the management has put systems and procedures in place to address the recommendations made for accurately registering children and keeping them safe. There is now a wide range of resources that promote positive images of race, gender, culture and disability.

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

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.

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 monitor procedure for collection of children

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