

# St Paul's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115376
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Morfett
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Hall, Mill Road, Northumberland Heath, Erith, Kent, DA8 1HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	U/A
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Committee of St Paul's Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Out of School 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Paul's Pre-school operates in St Paul's Church hall and is a committee run group supported by Church members. It opened in 1992 and operates from three rooms. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:00 for morning sessions and 12:30 to 15:00 for afternoon session, for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 69 children aged from two and a half to under five years, on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one working towards a qualification and two are working towards the next level.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a hygienic environment because staff follow good cleaning routines. For example, surfaces are wiped with anti-bacterial spray and floors are swept at the end of each session. There are good systems in place to promote children's understanding of effective hygiene practice. For example, resources are easily accessible and children voluntarily wash their hands after going to the toilet. They are reminded by pictures and posters in the bathrooms and understand that they are getting rid of germs as they wash. Children are protected from infectious illness because they do not attend when they are sick, parents are provided with recommended exclusion periods through the terms newsletter and staff have current qualifications in first aid for babies and young children. Therefore, the risk of cross infection is minimised.

Accident and medication records are in place. Accident records maintain confidentiality, however, they are inconsistent as frequently second names are not recorded and not all parents are asked to sign. Consequently this does not make the procedure secure. The group rarely give medication during the session, however, if children are taking on-going medication, written permission is obtained and notes of each dose are made.

Children's physical development is promoted through a good range of activities. For example, they take part in organised activities where they learn the effect exercise has on their bodies, they are encouraged to feel their heart beating after being active and then again after they have rested. Children make observations that it is beating slower once they have rested. Children can access a large physical activity such as, the climbing frame each day and they use a varied range of tools such as, hammers and nails to develop their hand-eye coordination. Children are actively involved in preparing the food they eat at snack time. Each day a group of children help to cut up the fruit and vegetables they will eat, discussing with the staff what is good for them. They can make choices about what they eat and drink when it comes to snack time and have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. Therefore, they begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a warm and welcoming environment. They arrive each day to a wide range of toys and activities set out for them to play with. The premises are made safe and secure during the session therefore, they are unable to leave the building unsupervised. Toys and resources are age appropriate, clean and in good condition, and support the children's learning experiences well.

Children's safety is suitably promoted. Each session a risk assessment is carried out to ensure the play areas are safe and secure. Potential safety issues are highlighted and action is taken to minimise these. The outside area is in a reasonable condition and the staff take steps to ensure it is safe when children are outside. An appropriate fire evacuation procedure is in place and practised regularly. Therefore, the children learn to keep themselves safe.

Children's welfare is protected. Staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care and through training opportunities

they keep themselves up-to-date. The written policy regarding child protection has useful information regarding signs and symptoms of abuse and a statement of procedure, should there be an allegation made against a member of staff, has recently been added. However, some information is out-of-date and does not refer to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and its procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly at the playgroup. Toys and activities are set out for them to make choices from. The range of activities is broad and covers children's area of learning well. For example, they can play with construction toys, farm animals and role play, take part in woodwork activities, read in the book corner, and paint, draw and mould play dough. Therefore, they are provided with balance and challenge. Children thrive within the clear routines. They have time for free play, small group time for organised activities with their key worker and time for physical or outside activities. They have warm relationships with the staff and look to them for reassurance. The staff support them well joining in with their games giving guidance as they play.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage is well developed. For example, they have ample training opportunities and some are training for the next level in qualification. They also have regular in-house training to keep themselves up-to-date. They use good teaching methods to help the children move forward. For example, staff ask challenging questions such as, 'how' 'why' and 'what' while children play. This makes them think about what they are doing and offers good learning experience through the effective questioning. Systems are in place to chart children's progress and identify the next steps in learning for them. Their starting points are recorded when they first start. During their time in the group staff make observations on them so they can establish where they are at and move them forward to the next stage. This information is used when the group are planning the activities for the children and clear learning intentions for them are identified. Therefore, children are making good progress.

Children's independence is strongly promoted. They are given opportunities to think in all situations. For example, the staff lay out the toys but let the children make the decision about how they will be set out, they provide chairs next to the tables and children can make the choice as to whether they sit or stand at the activity and they can choose what time they have a snack, giving them time to finish what they are doing. Therefore, children develop independence and self esteem which helps them to be confident learners. They thoroughly enjoy reading and listening to stories. The book corner is utilised well. One child sits for a significant period retelling a familiar story by the pictures. Children learn about sound through effective group activities. For example, during a music session they are asked to listen to various instruments, then again with their hands over their ears. Children use a wide range of words to describe the differences they hear. Opportunities to develop writing skills are available through a well resourced graphics area. However, there are limited opportunities for children to write for a purpose in other activities.

Children develop a good understanding of maths through the well planned activities. For example, as they cut fruit at snack time they talk about size and shape cutting apples into 'half' then 'quarters.' When the children make play dough they put the ingredients into the bowl

using their hands. They discuss 'how many' it takes to fill the bowl and compare this to 'how many' spoons they used last time. Children enjoy investigating natural materials as they take part in woodwork activities. They begin to realise tools can be used for a purpose as they hammer the nails into the wood. Children enjoy many creative activities during the session. They explore the textures of malleable materials such as, play dough and express themselves through free painting. Staff encourage them to talk about colour and texture as they paint and they explore what happens when colours are mixed together. Therefore, children show an eagerness to experiment and explore during their time in the group

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about positive images in our society. For example, they play with a range of resources which contain a broad reflection of other cultures, religions and positive images of gender roles. They take part in festivals, celebrating events such as, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Their individual needs are met because their parents provide clear details of their medical, dietary and cultural needs. The group have a positive attitude towards caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual education plans are put in place to help them move forward and the group have developed good relationships with outside agencies to support them.

Children behave well at the playgroup. Positive behaviour is promoted by frequent praise and encouragement for example, staff say 'well done' as the children play, making them feel valued. Appropriate strategies are used to manage unwanted behaviour such as, distraction. Staff get down to child level and speak calmly to them explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable. Parents are well informed of the care their children receive because they enter into clear written agreements. A wide range of written information is provided for them. The staff spend time chatting to them at the beginning and end of the session letting them know how the children have been. Parents are very involved in the group and come in to share their skills and experiences.

The partnership with parents is good. Information on the Foundation stage and the planning is displayed for parents to see. They discuss the areas of learning and the activities which promote this during the settling in visits. Regular coffee mornings are held so parents can come in and discuss their children and their progress. During these sessions there are professionals who talk to the parents about all aspects of children's development. Parents report that they are very happy with the progress their children are making and feel fully involved in their care and education.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through the range of activities provided for them, and through discussion with staff. Therefore, children learn about the world around them.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an appropriately organised environment. Space is utilised well to enable them to move freely through the activities. The staff ratio is suitably maintained and staff deployment ensures that the children are supported as they learn. There are procedures in place to ensure all adults who work with the children are suitable to do so. However, not all

people associated with the group have been suitably checked or notified to Ofsted. Most staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications and nearly all the staff are first aid trained.

The required documentation and paperwork are in place and maintained to a suitable standard. For example, the registration certificate is displayed for the parents to see and the attendance record is in place. However, children's arrival and departure times are not recorded. There is an appropriate range of policies and procedures which make up the groups operational plan. The manager recognises the group's responsibilities for investigating any complaints parents and carers may have about the care they provide under the National Standards and takes positive steps to provide the parents with the contact details of Ofsted.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are clear aims for the learning and education of the children. The staff work well together as a team and actively take part in the planning. Therefore, the children move through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals well. Regular staff meetings are held where the monitoring and evaluation of the Foundation Stage is assessed. Staff attend regular training as part of their personal development. The group as a whole are committed to the development and improvement of the care that is provided. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the playgroup were asked to ensure that all records were maintained confidentially. They have reviewed their practice and all records are kept confidentially. During the Nursery Education inspection the playgroup were asked to develop their role play areas so children could express themselves imaginatively and create more opportunities for children to freely select creative materials. They have developed the role play area and provide a wide range of resources for children to use to develop their imaginations. They offer a good range of creative resources which are accessible to the children to express themselves freely. Therefore, children's learning experiences have been extended.

### **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.

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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 system to record accidents is secure
- up-date the child protection policy to reflect the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures
- ensure arrival and departure times are noted in the record of attendance
- ensure all members of the pre-school committee are appropriately checked and vetted

### **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):

- create more opportunities for children to write for a purpose

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)