

St Paul's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 220081

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Inspector Rosemary Moore

Setting Address Semilong Community Centre, Norfolk Terrace, Northampton,
Northamptonshire, NN2 6HS

Telephone number 07923053411

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Registered person St Paul's Playgroup (Semilong)

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 good. 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 Playgroup is a committee run, sessional group which opened in 1990. It operates from a community centre close to Northampton town centre. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. It opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings 09:15 to 11:45 am and Thursday afternoons 12:30 to 15:00 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these seven children are in receipt of funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the group serves the local area. The setting supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff. Two members of staff hold a Level 3 qualification in childcare and others have or are working towards an appropriate childcare qualification. The playgroup receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the warm, welcoming environment which awaits them on arrival at the setting. The premises are kept clean through daily cleaning routines and this provides a healthy environment. Children begin to develop an awareness of personal hygiene, because they are encouraged to understand why they need to wash their hands before meals. This reduces the risk of cross-infection within the setting. Children's health is promoted because staff have attended paediatric first aid training and can administer treatment in the event of an accident. Appropriate information is requested from parents about children's individual health needs, including permission to seek emergency medical advice and treatment. Children do not have medication administered in the setting, unless there is an allergy or life threatening condition with appropriate documentation and secure storage available. Children do not normally rest or sleep during the session, unless they become unwell and then parents collect them immediately. As a consequence children's well-being is supported and monitored.

Children are well nourished because they enjoy a good range of healthy snacks which include a variety of fresh fruit. They have their individual dietary needs met, as snacks are agreed with their parents. Children have a choice of drinks which includes milk, juice and water at snack time. Fresh water and juice is available in drink fountains and milk in a jug which children can independently access to fill their own beakers. This ensures they are well hydrated and comfortable during the session. Staff generally take most precautions when preparing food for snacks. Children are able to stay for the lunch club occasionally and bring their packed lunches to the setting on arrival. These are all placed on the side in the kitchen until they are required at lunch time, when care is taken to ensure each child has their own lunch. However, staff are not all fully aware of the food hygiene regulations and procedures which can help to prevent cross-contamination.

Children have good access to wide range of exciting physical activities both indoors and outside. They benefit from and enjoy being in the fresh air as they run around in the garden, climbing and balancing on apparatus. They are developing the confidence to practise riding on or in wheeled toys, crawl through tunnels and move with control. This helps children to develop spatial awareness, for example, they can negotiate their own space when playing. Children roll a ball through the large tubes from the climbing frame, use scissors, spades and spoons to scoop wet sand and dry pasta, they manipulate dough and cornflour mix, all of which develops their hand skills effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre-school environment is made very welcoming to children and parents through a variety of pictures, posters, displays of information and children's creative work. Space within the setting is used appropriately to effectively create areas which promote different types of play and support the children's learning. They are able to independently select toys from a range of resources put out daily, including choosing creative resources from drawers containing an interesting variety.

Children are kept safe because staff carry out regular risk assessments, monitor the premises and make daily visual checks when setting up activities both inside and out. Children are

developing an awareness of keeping themselves safe as they regularly practise the evacuation drill, with some children involved in a real emergency when the neighbouring derelict school premises was on fire earlier this year. Fun activities and events are also arranged for the children including visits from the fire brigade when they are able to learn about safety.

Children are well protected because the manager has a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures and ensures that the staff team is aware of their responsibility to safeguard the children within the setting. There is a written child protection policy along with guidance to follow. This helps to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. They quickly join in with play because staff encourage parents to settle children and this helps them to become familiar with staff and the environment. They show curiosity and interest in what they are doing, for example, children open the cupboards in the home corner, selecting cooking utensils and pots to place on the cooker.

Children purposely engage in a wide range of stimulating activities. These are planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which helps children to develop at their own pace. Staff use observation and assessment to set individual goals with realistic expectations. Children enjoy exploring the range of textures and sensory play such as sand, dry pasta and cornflour mix. They begin to play with each other, use their imagination in role play and develop physical skills as they engage in a wide variety of interesting outdoor activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals because senior staff plan an interesting and varied range of activities for them. The planning is based on the six areas of learning and most of the staff have a clear understanding of the framework, effectively engaging children in activities. Although not all are fully aware of the intended learning of each activity, which leads to some variation in teaching. Children are well supervised by staff who take an interest in their activities, working closely with them. Staff organise space and resources effectively and use a mix of creative activities, where children can make good choices. For example, children choose boxes and design their own models. Some other creative activities are adult-led, sometimes with a little too much direction which restricts children in their creativity, experimentation and exploration, although they do have other opportunities to do this. The everyday routines which are followed are familiar to the children and give them a sense of time, although these sometimes distract children's concentration. For example, all children stop what they are doing, to get ready for snack.

Children are happy and confident to try different activities within the setting. They are confident to seek out staff to assist them if they wish. They wait their turn at the climbing frame and share toys and equipment well. Children are developing a level of independence as they find an apron to put on for creative activities. They are learning about the group and how they fit into the community through outings and visitors, for example, they visit local shops in the community.

Children are beginning to communicate well with each other and staff. They have many opportunities to develop their language through activities. For example, the group session

encourages children to listen and participate in songs and stories. Children are busy and they behave well, showing they understand rules within the setting. They are given lots of praise and encouragement which builds their self-esteem. Children have written print all around the playroom and staff ensure they are able to access mark-making activities to develop their early writing skills. Children are learning to hold writing implements and use these effectively to make marks, trying to write their name on the paper by copying their name card. They also experiment with other mark making opportunities, for example, children use water and a paint brush outside to paint the fence or path.

Children are learning about number through a variety of ways. They count in group time use nursery rhymes and songs. There are lots of posters and creative work on the wall within the playroom, at child level which display numbers. Children learn and talk about shape and if a container is full or empty. They all have access to shape through jigsaws and craft activities. Children measure, they sort objects by colour, size and shape, use scales to balance and they compare objects. This encourages children to become aware of number, shape and mathematical language in everyday situations.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate, for example, they dig in the sand tray, fill containers, explore how the texture of wet sand feels and what they can do with it. They observe living creatures and discuss how they live, for example, they watch the giant snails and the stick insects within containers in the room. They spend time in the outdoors where they are able to watch birds and discuss changes in the weather, collect leaves and study natural objects. Children understand how to work the music player and other technology; they make use of musical instruments and use these to express themselves. Children build creations with construction straws and cogs, showing developing skills emerging with their hands. They use their imagination as they become involved in role play in the home corner, cooking and caring for others, both indoors and in the garden.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs well met because information with regard to each child is carefully gathered from parents. Staff know the children well and the key worker system ensures that all of them are given individual support where required. None of the children who currently attend have any identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are confident to make choices for themselves during each session and staff support them in their activities. For example, children select boxes for their own creative models and select the drinks of their choice for snack. Some of the staff have additional training, for example, in speech and language and are able to identify and provide for children's individual needs. On arrival parents and children are made welcome by a member of staff who supervises the entrance. Further members of staff are also available to spend time to discuss issues which may have arisen. Children select their named photo card to be signed in and quickly join in to play with their friends. Parents are reunited with their children and again staff are very happy to share information regarding the session. Written information including policies and procedures is available on registering the children into the setting, there are several notice boards displaying relevant information and regular meetings are held, which parents are invited to attend.

Children are beginning to learn about the wider world, through a good range of multi-cultural resources and activities which are available to them. Creative displays of the children's work reminds them of their outing on a bus in the local community. Parents and carers are made welcome in the pre-school and they are encouraged to have involvement especially by sharing

their views and culture with the group. This encourages children to learn about and respect differences within our society. Children behave very well. Group time is used well to explain and reinforce good behaviour with lots of praise and encouragement in a quiet manner with all of the children listening effectively. For example, they patiently await to hear their name and are rewarded with a sticker. They clearly understand the boundaries and staff act as good role models occasionally giving reminders of what is expected of them during the session, although this was not seen to be required very often. The children choose to work in a variety of different groups getting on well together with their peers and the staff. By working in small groups or individually with a member of staff they build their self-esteem. This creates a calm environment where children are happy and busy. They share toys and resources and actively participate by taking turns at using equipment, such as the indoor climbing frame and slide.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They are provided with good information about the setting and its educational provision, including information about the curriculum their child is working with. Parents understand that information on their child's progress is kept and they can discuss the achievement with staff, all of whom they are familiar to them. They are able to share information at the beginning of the programme and contribute to this at a later stage. Parents understand they are able to stay and see the child during the session if they wish to have a little more involvement on what the child is doing. Story and picture books are available on a loan basis which children can choose and return as they wish. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and happy in the setting. They benefit from the well-organised space and resources which allows them to play and develop ideas in a safe environment. There are sufficient staff with a relevant childcare qualification and training such as first aid, to support the care and well-being of children. Adults working with children undergo appropriate vetting procedures. Children are supervised by the staff who support them well with activities throughout the session. The operational plan is organised and clearly details the running of the setting and is available to parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff and committee work well together as a committed team to provide good quality of care and nursery education. There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the use of the Foundation Stage guidance and parents are kept informed of their child's progress. Staff discuss most ongoing practice issues, planning and the children's development, with an appraisal system in place to monitor their training and professional development. The setting works closely with other professionals, acting on their advice to improve the outcomes for children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the pre-school was asked to make several changes, one was to improve the registration system which now correctly shows hours of attendance of staff. The child protection policy has been updated to follow the safeguarding guidelines, including any allegations against a member of staff, and the range of activities now includes further resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

At the last early education inspection the pre-school was asked to make parents aware of children's achievements and future learning targets. These are now made available to parents through regular discussion and meetings. They were also asked to further develop the range of resources available to children to create opportunities for them to solve simple mathematic problems, and to be able to select and design their own creations. These areas have both been addressed and a range of activities are available daily to the children to support children in their development.

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 upon 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 good. 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 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 those responsible for the preparation and handling of food have an awareness of, and comply with the regulations relating to food safety and hygiene.

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):

- devise a system to ensure all staff are fully aware of the intended learning outcome for activities to enable them to support and extend children's learning
- ensure everyday routines do not distract the children's concentration and perseverance at activities.

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