

St Paul's Beckenham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137360
Inspection date	05 March 2008
Inspector	Beverly Hallett
Setting Address	St.Paul's Church Hall, Brackley Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2NF
Telephone number	020 8650 4281
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Registered person	St Paul's Beckenham Pre-School
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 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 Pre-School is operated by a management committee of church representatives and pre-school parents. It opened in 1980 and operates from church halls in a residential area of Beckenham in the outskirts of Bromley. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45, term time only, except Thursdays when it is open from 12:30 until 15:00. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community. The pre-school currently has a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, three including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children keep healthy because they receive care in premises which are in good hygienic condition. They are effectively encouraged to use suitable personal hygiene practices, and toys and equipment are regularly sterilised and kept in good condition. Written parental consent is obtained for any medication to be given, and details of its administration are recorded. Accident records are well organised and accurately monitor incidents and children's well-being. Children's health is maintained because practitioners are well qualified for first aid and able to respond appropriately to children's accidents. A clear policy with parents for ill or sick children ensures that they are suitably cared for when unwell, and this helps to reduce cross-infection and keep others healthy.

Children enjoy a good, healthy and varied range of snack foods, including savoury items, fresh fruit and salad, cheese, raisins and apples. Practitioners have good knowledge of children's dietary requirements and organise suitable foods to keep them healthy. This information is recorded and made available to practitioners to maintain children's good health. Children have good access to drinking water at all times, being able to pour it themselves at a small table in the main play area. This keeps them well hydrated and comfortable, supporting their active involvement in play and learning.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that promote their physical movement skills. They have outdoor play every session and benefit greatly from the fresh air and exercise. Children enthusiastically use large equipment to climb on and go through and under, developing good balance and coordination. Children display good physical coordination as they play on tricycles and ride-on toys, and with footballs and climbing equipment. However, on some occasions the outside time is poorly organised and this results in a chaotic and potentially dangerous experience for children. Boundaries between areas are not clear and staff's implementation of these boundaries is inconsistent, leading to children on bikes riding into the landing area of the slide and occasionally into children rolling in the large tunnels. Children also experience planned activities that provide them with challenges and encourage them to try different ways of moving and working together; for example, using a large parachute, and participating in football coaching sessions run by a professional organisation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment. The layout and organisation of the indoor environment offers children a suitably stimulating space in which to play. Children's safety and comfort is supported by a satisfactory range of child-sized furniture and play equipment which are kept in good order. Written risk assessments are completed for the premises and this reduces any risk to children. However, there is no risk assessment for the outside play area and this, along with the sometimes poor organisation of outside times, potentially compromises children's safety. In addition, no strategies are used to encourage children to develop an awareness of how to take care of their own safety.

Although the setting has child protection procedures and contact details for relevant local agencies, the written policy is not based on current legislation and guidance for safeguarding children, which potentially limits the effectiveness of safeguarding for children. However,

practitioners have a sound understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they have a concern and this helps to protect children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

On arrival children engage quickly with resources and in interactions with others; they enjoy their time at the pre-school and enthusiastically participate in the appropriate range of stimulating activities set out by staff each day. However, as some of the toys provide similar experiences - for example, construction type toys or telephones and writing tools placed on several tables - and as children are not able to select additional or different resources to follow their own interests, their concentration wanes. As a result, some children begin to run around and create a boisterous atmosphere in the latter half of the indoor part of the daily routine.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have some knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance, demonstrating awareness of the six areas of learning. They have some knowledge of children's abilities and use this to support children's learning within planned play. For example, children find their own name as they arrive and put it onto the table ready to put their art work next to it to take home later. However, identical observations of children's achievements are repeated in several children's files. This is because staff carry out observations by setting up an activity and observing children under adult direction rather than observing naturally occurring interests and skills. This is potentially detrimental to children's individual learning and in particular means that more able children may not be offered the opportunity to show their full potential.

Children are confident to be without their main carer and demonstrate good relationships with adults and their peers. They are cooperative and play alone, in pairs and in small groups. Children show levels of independence with personal care and help to pour drinks and serve their own foods.

Children enjoy stories read to them by adults and show good interest in looking at books for enjoyment, using them appropriately, turning pages and following aspects of the narrative. Whilst staff use formal teaching methods to encourage letter recognition as part of large group times - for example, encouraging children to make the 'sssss' sound for snake, and talking about the 'angry ant' to clarify the sound rather than the name of the letter - there are few resources available as part of everyday activities and areas to encourage children to write for a variety of purposes. This is the same for maths and number work. As a result, children do not engage in these areas of learning freely and therefore do not develop a wide variety of skills in these areas. In particular, boys do not access literacy and number activities, and limit their play to imaginative and construction resources.

Children engage in songs and rhymes that include simple addition or subtraction; for example, adding or taking away by one at a time. They are developing the ability to count with numbers in the right order, and start to label one number to each object by pointing at each item in turn as they help to count how many children are present at the large group registration.

Children can construct and shape using various materials; for example, when using construction toys and in using malleable materials. They use their imaginations well and staff support this by providing a good range of resources to extend the play. For example children are thoroughly

involved in quite complex play based around doctors and hospitals, and staff make sure there are plenty of bandages, plasters and other resources to support this play. Staff join in and pretend to be patients; however, they limit their interaction to the children's imaginative play and do not bring in other areas, such as maths to measure temperature, which would extend children's learning further.

A computer is available daily and children show their confidence and familiarity with this technology as they use it without adult support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is fostered. Children make independent play choices and develop their own play ideas, and as a result gender stereotyping is minimised. However, little thought is given as part of curriculum planning to ensure all areas are made interesting to both boys and girls, as a result, boys are not accessing writing and number equipment as part of their play choices. Children have access to some books which reflect positive images of race, but toys and resources in general do not reflect the diversity of society with regards to differences in ability, gender and family background. Therefore children are developing limited awareness of the society in which we live.

Overall children are well behaved as staff interact with them well and ensure they are occupied. Children's confidence is fostered as staff praise children's efforts using phrases such as 'good walking' and 'good listening' so that children are aware of the types of behaviours which are valued and encouraged. However, when playing outside, staff's implementation of rules and boundaries are inconsistent and this confuses children, leading them to challenge the boundaries and disregard the rules on some occasions.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. There are some very good practices in place which support a strong partnership in some areas; for example, parents sit on the management committee and parent helpers work effectively alongside staff in the setting on a regular basis. A leaflet and a display board offers information about the setting's policies and procedures, informing them of staff's responsibilities in caring for children. Good practice in providing a complaints procedure and a termly newsletter advising parents of curriculum planning promotes professional relationships. However, not all parents are clear about their children's progress towards the early learning goals, and the weaknesses in recording children's progress means that parents do not receive a detailed and individual account of their child's development and interests. Staff also share information about children's general well-being when parents collect them to ensure they are well informed of how their child has been physically and emotionally.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The quality of management and leadership is satisfactory. The manager is aware of the weaknesses in the setting and has a clear vision and plan for improvement. This includes staff training and the development of further policies and procedures to improve practice in all areas.

The weaknesses in the organisation of the environment means that not all children are sufficiently challenged by the variety of resources offered each session. However, children are

able to move between activities, making independent choices, and generally play happily enjoying focused attention from adults.

A comprehensive operations plan underpins the work of the pre-school staff. All documentation sampled during the inspection was up to date, completed appropriately and stored confidentially.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve children's safety by improving some areas of record keeping. A visitors book now records all adults attending the pre-school and children's registers are taken at the beginning of each session. In addition, should the manager be absent, a named deputy is present; all staff are aware of the responsibilities attached to this role, and therefore know who to turn to for management and leadership.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints 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 organisation of outside times supports all children's safety at all times
- ensure that the curriculum is planned to offer children a wide variety of types of play at each session

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):

- improve the provision of toys and resources which encourage children to write and use number skills as part of their everyday play
- develop staff's abilities in observation and record keeping to ensure that children's development is noted in naturally occurring play as well as adult planned activities, therefore giving a clear picture of children's individual interests and development

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