

St Paul's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Helen Barter

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St. Pauls Playgroup first opened in 1987 and moved to the present premises in 2004. It operates from a playroom and designated garden area at St Pauls Primary School, in the inner city area of Gloucester, with which it has close links. The playgroup has access to the school hall, infant toilet facilities and playground. Most of the children come from the local area with a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds. There are currently 34 children from two years to under five years on roll. This includes children who are in receipt of funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions according to requirements. The playgroup supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the group supports those who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup opens during school term times for five sessions a week. These take place from 09.00am until 12.00pm. St Paul's Playgroup is managed by a committee of parents, carers and volunteers. The playgroup employs an administrator. Four staff work with the children and all have early years qualifications, two to level 3 and two to level 2. All four are currently studying for higher level qualifications. Parents and carers of the children who attend also help out at the group. The setting receives teacher support from the Early Years Childcare Services Foundation Stage Consultants. It is a member of the local Playgroup and Toddler Association. The setting is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy attending this happy and inclusive playgroup, and their parents and carers are very pleased with it as a result. Staff's commitment to training is indicative of their drive to meet children's needs as well as they can. They have taken effective action to remedy weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This, and the staff's well-developed understanding of the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, indicates that there is good capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review with staff the system for assessment and planning, to remove any inconsistencies in practice and ensure that all areas of learning are promoted equally well for all children
- help children to develop a greater sense of responsibility about their behaviour towards others and help them develop their skills of independence

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Procedures for safeguarding are well established and effective. Staff have been well trained in their responsibilities to protect children in their care. Risk assessments of all areas used by children are regularly undertaken and any areas identified for action are quickly dealt with. All the required documentation and policies with regard to children's welfare have been reviewed recently by the staff and management committee and are made freely available to parents and carers. Staff welcome children, parents and carers warmly at the beginning of each session. The effective key person system gives children confidence to turn to an adult for help. Parents and carers are reassured that their children are well cared for, saying things such as, 'my child is happy and settled very quickly'. Information on children's achievements is regularly shared with parents and carers through displays of work and through discussions of their child's progress in their learning journals. Parents and carers are actively encouraged, through a rota, to help regularly in the setting. Most take up this opportunity and those who do say that it really helps them to be more involved and understand how children learn and develop.

The setting makes good use of links with outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and specialist support for those learning to speak English, to ensure that children's special educational and language development needs are well met. Staff's commitment to continuous improvement is shown through their training in writing individual education plans for children with particular special educational needs and/or disabilities and the use of foreign language signs, symbols and visual timelines to offer greater inclusion and communication with particular children. These are effective in ensuring that all children are included equally well in all that the setting has to offer and they make good progress as a result. There are good and productive links with the adjoining primary school, and other primary schools, which aid children's transition into full-time education. The playleader provides a strong lead in promoting effective teamwork. Staff regularly discuss how well they are meeting children's needs and how they can improve the setting further, attending training courses regularly to be better informed about best practice in early years. A great deal of work has been done to improve assessment and planning activities since the previous inspection. Planning of activities is now built firmly around children's interests and the staff's good understanding of their needs. The staff know that they need to continue to review their practice, including monitoring the quality of children's learning journals, to make sure that consistent practice is always followed and that all areas of learning are promoted equally well in the planned activities. The playleader and staff know the setting very well and have clear and appropriately placed ambitions for its continued improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and well cared for and so they enjoy learning and achieve well. They make choices for themselves and for others, such as playing with balls in the 'cage' in the playground. They confidently select their own resources because they are easily accessible. Children delight in their achievements, proudly saying, 'I painted this red and green,' when painting a picture or exclaiming, 'Look! I found a worm!' when digging in the garden. Children enjoy songs with actions, such as 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' and love repeating the story of 'Shark in the Park' as a member of staff acts out the story with puppets, shrieking with delight when the shark appears. They enjoy using the computer and are competent when using the mouse to fill in colours on a 'Mr Men' program. Children have curiosity about the world around them, for example carefully examining a lizard found inside a rolled-up mat. They enjoy being outside in the securely fenced garden area, having space to jump and roll and play together using large soft shapes as a train. The outdoor area is used well. Children value the summerhouse as a place to go for quiet group work but also when pretending it's a spaceship for role play. Children's communication, language and literacy are well developed by staff because they constantly engage them in dialogue, asking them questions and talking to them about their activities. Children feel safe in the pre-school because they have good relationships with adults and they happily turn to them for help, knowing that they will be listened to. Most children behave well, although some do not understand the impact of their actions on others, such as taking balls away from another child. Staff are careful to set expectations for behaviour and help children to learn the importance of good sitting, good listening and 'gentle hands'. Children who have specific behavioural difficulties are very well supported. They have clear targets to work towards in their individual education plans. All the staff also know these targets which means that there is a consistent approach in helping these children to modify their behaviour. Children learn to eat healthily, enjoying snacks such as fresh fruit and noodles. They readily help themselves to fresh drinking water. Children learn basic personal hygiene when washing hands before eating and most respond well to reminders to use and flush the toilet appropriately. Children make a satisfactory positive contribution. They become confident and learn to share and cooperate willingly with other children and adults. They sit happily together and willingly help to put things away but do not have enough opportunity to act independently, for example helping to set out equipment at snack time. Nevertheless, with their good development in all areas of their learning, and their satisfactory personal and social skills, children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met