



St. Paul's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139381
Inspection date	18 January 2006
Inspector	Susan June Stone

Setting Address	St. Pauls Play Group, The Horsa Block, Simons Road, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 4DN
Telephone number	01935 815897
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Registered person	St Pauls 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 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 was established 33 years ago. It is situated in the grounds of the old Sherborne Primary School in the town of Sherborne. The playgroup is based in a self contained unit, it serves the local community and works closely with local schools. It is a sessional playgroup, with charity status that is run by a parental committee of volunteers, they operate under the Preschool Learning Alliance constitution and have adapted their policies. The playgroup serves the local

community and places are offered to children who come from a range of different backgrounds. Some have been identified as having special educational needs, but none of them have English as an additional language. The playgroup is in receipt of the Government funding, there are 35 children on roll and currently there are 21 three year olds and 8 four year olds that are funded. The playgroup is registered for 24 2-5 year olds. They are open term time only, Monday to Friday from 9:00 - 12 noon. Dependent on numbers, afternoon sessions from 13:00 - 15:30 are also offered. The accommodation consists of a foyer with access to toilet facilities and two play rooms. One houses a segregated kitchen area and is set up for imaginary and physical activities. The session is divided to allow the children opportunities to use both areas. The setting also has it's own tarmac outdoor play area that is securely fenced and gated. The playgroup employs a preschool leader who holds the Diploma in Preschool Practice and six members of staff, five of whom are appropriately qualified and one member who is currently undertaking NVQ III in child care and education. St Paul's Playgroup has achieved accreditation with the Preschool Learning Alliance. Support and curriculum advice is given by the advisors from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a stimulating and fun range of activities that help contribute to their healthy growth and development. Children learn about good personal care and the spread of infection, and are familiar with the hand washing routines. They know that you wash hands to 'help stop spreading germs'. The children enjoy the social occasion of snack time, where they are offered a different healthy snack each day, which could be breadsticks or a selection of fresh fruit including melon and grapes. The children are beginning to show responsibility for their own health needs, knowing that you have to eat good foods like fruit and vegetables to help you grow.

The daily routine allows the children to experience regular physical play both indoors and out. They take part in outdoor physical activities where they run, jump, pedal bikes and ride scooters. These activities help them to develop large muscle skills and co-ordination. They also have opportunities for indoor gym sessions where they are encouraged to stretch and develop body movements.

Staff have a good knowledge of first aid, ensuring medical emergencies can be dealt with effectively. All necessary records and documentation regarding children's health are in place, this means that their individual health care needs can be consistently met and respected.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment. Potential risks to children are minimised because staff use regular risk assessments to reduce

potential hazards, this ensures the children can enjoy a variety of play opportunities in safe surroundings. The staff are deployed well within the setting and appropriate adult to child ratios are always maintained. This ensures the children are closely supervised at all times, when enjoying indoor and outside play. The play area is well set out to allow the children to move around freely and safely. The children use a wide range of toys and resources which conform to safety standards. They are able to make choices from the activities set out each day and know where to find additional resources like pens and papers, which they confidently select for themselves.

The children are encouraged to learn about safety when at the playgroup, for example, they help to tidy away the toys at the end of the morning, they know that they must "line up before going outside and wait by the door". This helps the children to take some responsibility for their own safety and well being.

Children are well protected by staff, who have a good understanding of their role in protecting children. All staff are aware of the settings child protection policies and procedures, making sure that the children's welfare is always a priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the playgroup and benefit from a well resourced environment. The children arrive happily and are eager to participate in the activities set out. They follow the daily routine with ease and familiarity, showing confidence and increasing independence. The children take part in all the activities with enthusiasm and a sense of enjoyment. They enjoy positive interaction from staff, which helps the children to learn and progress in all areas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage. They plan activities and play opportunities to encourage children's development. Staff are appropriately involved in the activities, they use open questioning effectively, which helps the children to learn and develop. Children are interested and enthusiastic to take part in the range of activities and experiences offered, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. These activities help them make progress towards the early learning goals. Plans show that activities link to the stepping stones, and that the children have a varied programme. Staff evaluate the daily planned activities to monitor children's progress through the early stepping stones. However these evaluations do not take account of the later, green stepping stones, which the more able children may have progressed towards.

Children are developing good relationships with each other and are sensitive to each others needs. They understand the daily routines within the setting, and they respond well to the positive praise and encouragement offered by staff. Most children are able to sit quietly as appropriate, such as at large group circle time and story time. Children are developing their personal independence, and are able to, and are

encouraged by staff to put on their own shoes and socks, and change into clothes for P.E. sessions. They are also able to pour their own drinks at snack time. Children use language well to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings. They confidently initiate conversations with adults and each other, and eagerly talk about what they are doing and why. Total communication sign language is being introduced into the setting, which the children are using and responding to well. Children enjoy books for stories, and they independently choose books to share with friends and with adults. They know how to handle books carefully and correctly.

They show an interest in numbers and counting, and they regularly count in daily routines, like how many children are present at register time. Children count spontaneously within their chosen play and are developing an understanding of simple calculation through number songs and rhymes. They are developing their skills in using ICT equipment, and competently use the mouse to control a simple computer program. They are learning about different festivals, cultures and beliefs, through topic work and themes and are learning to value and respect the views and beliefs of others. They enjoy many creative activities and use their imagination well in role play and games, re-creating familiar scenarios, such as filling up with petrol and stopping at the traffic lights. Children move around the setting with confidence, they successfully negotiate space when riding bikes and scooters in the outdoor area. Children enjoy favourite songs and rhymes and they join in with enthusiasm and enjoyment, matching actions and movements to the words. Overall, the children are making progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are building good relationships with staff and peers. Staff know the children well, they monitor and support children's individual needs. The children communicate and socialise with ease, they help each other and work well together, an example of this is when they build train tracks together. The children demonstrate good manners and are polite, saying 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate, such as at snack time. The children show respect and kindness for each other and staff, they are caring and sensitive to each others needs and show a good sense of belonging. Older children help the younger children to fasten their coats before going outside to play. The children are familiar with the daily routine, and know they have to help to tidy away the toys, and line up at the door before going outside. They behave well, they are aware of the realistic boundaries that have been set. They respond effectively to staff direction. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement and are positive role models for the children. The children show pleasure when being awarded a 'well done' sticker for good behaviour or achievement.

Through planned activities the children are offered opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the wider world around them. Local people from the community have visited the playgroup such as, policeman. This helps the children to learn how they fit into their community and surroundings. The children celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to a range of resources, which help to promote positive attitudes to diversity. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is

fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the staff's friendly relationship with parents. This helps to contribute to the consistency in the children's care and well-being in the setting. Staff are available to talk with parents each day. Information about the provision is regularly shared with parents through newsletters, a notice board, the prospectus and talking to staff at the end of each session.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The care offered is well supported by efficient organisation and good leadership and management of daily sessions. The pre-school is run by a committee who oversee the general organisation of the pre-school. Daily sessions are organised by the Pre school leader and staff.

The children benefit from a well organised environment with well planned activities, which enables them to play and explore freely. They experience a wide variety of different play opportunities, which support their development and learning. Staff are well qualified and experienced in childcare, and have a good understanding of child development. They continue to attend ongoing training courses and workshops to update and improve their knowledge of child care and education. They are well motivated and teamwork is evident. The staff are all aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. They are enthusiastic in their roles and committed to working with the children.

All the required documentation, which helps contribute to the children's health, safety and well being are in place, although some policies and procedures that are available to parents lack some necessary information. Overall, the playgroup meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation to be addressed from the previous care inspection and three from the nursery education inspection. The care inspection recommended that the information available to parents should be improved, if they wished to make a complaint. This referred to including details of Ofsted in the complaints procedure. This information is now available to parents.

The nursery education inspection recommended that the group develop challenges set for children through effective staff questioning throughout activities, with particular regard to mathematical development, improve upon the organisation and availability of books within the environment to extend opportunities to develop book skills and extend the opportunities given to children for them to explore the natural world and environment they live in.

Staff now take a more active role with valuable questioning, especially in mathematical development and now provide a broader range of games and activities,

involving things such as dice, matching, sorting and problem solving to incorporate challenges for the children to resolve themselves. The book corner has been made more attractive to encourage the children to use it more of their own accord, and a small range of books have been introduced into the second playroom for the children to use. Staff also actively encourage children to look at books during the daily sessions. Planning shows children are offered opportunities and activities, which help them to explore the natural world and environment in which they live, such as planting bulbs and watching them grow, and visits to the setting by people from the local community such as the police.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 3 – Care, learning and play, National Standard 5 – Equipment and National Standard 11 – Behaviour. Concerns were raised regarding equipment and management of children's behaviour. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate the concerns and report back within 7 working days. The provider responded with a detailed report and from the information received there was no evidence to suggest that the National Standards were not being met. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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):

- review and update policy documentation in line with National Standards, with particular regards to child protection and complaints

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):

- review the monitoring and recording of children's development to ensure more able children are suitably challenged

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk