

# St. Paul's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	139381
<b>Inspection date</b>	04/10/2010
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<b>Setting address</b>	St. Pauls Play Group, The Horsa Block, Simons Road, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 4DN
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

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. 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. A very small minority are at the early stages of learning English. The playgroup is registered for 24 two to five year olds at any one time and is in receipt of government funding for some children. Currently there are 28 children on roll in the early years age range. It is open term time only, Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 noon. Dependent on numbers, afternoon sessions from 12.30pm to 3.30pm could be 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 setting also has its own tarmac outdoor play area that is securely fenced and gated. The playgroup employs a preschool leader who holds a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Childcare and Education and five members of staff, four of whom are appropriately qualified and one member who is currently undertaking NVQ Level 2 in Childcare and Education. Support and curriculum advice is given by the advisors from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

St Paul's Playgroup is a good, inclusive setting that meets children's individual needs well, particularly through good planning and assessment. Children experience a safe, warm and stimulating environment in which the staff promote good learning and provide very good care. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are in the first stages of learning English, enjoy a wide range of activities across all areas of learning both indoors and outside. There has been good improvement since the last inspection helped by the setting's effective self-evaluation and its commitment to the development of all staff. These enable the setting to have a good capacity for further improvement.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- increase opportunities to develop children's independence, for example by labelling all resources clearly
- promote further the culture of reflective practice by evaluating the changes recently made to the organisation of the sessions to ensure that the flow of

activities meets the children's needs and maximises opportunities.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff safeguard children's welfare very well and as a result, children learn in a calm, safe and healthy environment. The setting has completed a comprehensive file that includes all the required policies and procedures. These are implemented fully and support good routines on a daily basis. For example there is gentle, but firm insistence on washing hands before snack and positive effective management of behaviour.

Since the last inspection the two recommendations have been fully addressed. The setting recently completed the Early Years Foundation Stage self-evaluation form and this is helping to identify further priorities in the drive for improvement. Staff and committee members have all been involved and as a result, practice is being carefully reviewed and developed. One example of this includes the recent changes made to the organisation of each morning to ensure a more seamless experience for children's learning. Another example is the identification of the need to label resources in such a way that children are better encouraged to find and put away things for themselves, developing further their level of independence. These changes are clearly informed by the staff's commitment to their own professional development. The qualifications held by staff provide a skilled workforce, making a significant contribution to the children's good progress at the setting. Links with other settings and outside agencies is a strength of the setting. Good liaison has been developed with both the Learning Centre, with whom they share a site, and with the adjacent primary school as well as the other primary school in the town. Sharing good practice and ideas with the primary schools and preparing children for the transition to their Reception year in school is a particularly strong feature. This is enhanced by such events as a Teddy Bears Picnic on the school site and regular weekly visits to school during the summer term. Staff enlist help from the local authority when the need arises, especially for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Particular staff are designated as coordinators for these children and are responsible for ensuring that their needs are fully met. Other links include offering work experience placements to young people and visiting the farm run by the Learning Centre. Relationships with parents are very good. Parents say that their children really enjoy the setting and are very safe and well cared for. The setting uses a variety of events to include parents in their work, such as coffee mornings, fund raising and the Christmas nativity play.

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

Children attend a well organised and spacious setting where they choose from a good range of learning activities. Relationships are excellent, demonstrated by a new child who joined on the day of the inspection and settled immediately, making friends and being fully included in activities by watchful staff. On arrival, all children are greeted with a smile and warm welcome. They cannot wait to begin to

play with well set out resources. Staff sustain children's welfare very effectively, providing additional support for a child at the early stages of learning English by using photographs of items to help ensure that they are fully included. They have yet to establish labelling in the child's home language. Many boxes of resources are as yet unlabelled making it difficult for children to choose or put away equipment. Staff consider the children's individual interests and needs as a priority. This is a particular strength of the setting and is well developed through detailed planning at an individual child level. Regular assessment is meticulously carried out and informs the next steps in learning for each child. These are then clearly identified in the plans for the following week. Assessments are collected on a daily basis and staff are given extra time to build a Key Record for each child that contains information about their learning and pictures of special moments in their development. These are presented to parents as a lasting record when children transfer to school. The children greatly appreciate and enjoy being able to choose indoor and outdoor learning activities for themselves. This 'free flow' in learning enables children to make good progress in developing independent and physical skills. Parents commented that the children come home having 'learnt something new' from each session. Girls and boys alike have great fun being firemen learning about the world around them as, with the help of an adult, they fill a long hose with water using a funnel and run to the other end of the hose to watch the water come out. They benefit especially from riding on bikes and scooters, strengthening their physical control and demonstrating through their activities that they know how to keep safe. During child-chosen activities, staff involvement in children's learning is particularly well established through good questioning and just the right amount of timely intervention to ensure that children make the best progress they can. Children contribute well to their learning in both child- and adult-chosen activities. They play with construction toys and puzzles, take part in singing rhymes and songs, use musical instruments to help them follow instructions and build up their knowledge of letters and sounds through games and stories and the 'writing corner'. They develop good personal and social skills as they learn to say please and thank you, put their cups on the tray and throw away their cores and peel during snack time, take turns when playing together and tidy up ready to go home. Staff are very good role models for the children in the way they treat each other. They ensure a positive learning environment through constant praise and encouragement. During the story 'Ten in the bed' children's progress in numeracy is promoted, learning to count backwards and forwards and to take one away. All these skills are preparing them well for the future. Children develop a good understanding of healthy living. At snack time they choose their own fruit and vegetables and a drink of milk or water. They understand that fruit and vegetables are good for you, one remarking that it will 'make me bigger than mummy!' Parents have been encouraged to support healthy eating and some send a substantial fruit snack from home. Water is readily available to children at all times. The setting joins in local events especially at the Learning Centre, particularly sports events and sponsored bounces. It has a good relationship with the local shop who sponsor competitions and give prizes. These events help the children to think of others and to contribute well to their local community.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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