

# St Paul's Walden Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY293964  
**Inspection date** 18/01/2011  
**Inspector** Martyn Richards

**Setting address** St. Pauls Walden Junior School, Bendish Lane, Whitwell,  
Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8HX

**Telephone number** 01438 871241 07748 170675

**Email**

**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. Paul's Walden Nursery is situated in the grounds of St. Paul's Walden Junior School in the village of Whitwell. Children attend from the village of Whitwell and the surrounding areas. The nursery has recently moved into new, purpose-built accommodation. The children have access to a partially-covered outdoor play area. The nursery is able to provide for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Sessions run Monday to Friday mornings between 9am and 12 noon and on Monday and Tuesday afternoons from 1pm to 3pm, term times only. The nursery also offers a lunch club between 12 noon and 1pm each weekday. The nursery was registered in 2006 and may cater for up to 36 children aged two to five years. There are currently 32 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The nursery has close links with the adjacent primary school and with a nearby children's centre. The nursery is in receipt of funding for early years education.

Five staff work with the children. All have appropriate childcare qualifications. Two assistants have National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in childcare at level 2 and are working towards level 3. One already is at level 3, one is at level 6 and another has a qualification from the National Nursery Education Board. The nursery is registered by 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.

St. Paul's Walden Nursery is a welcoming and secure community where children feel valued and their individual needs are catered for well. It is an inclusive nursery, and its programme is well adapted for the range of ages and abilities present. Relationships between children and staff are friendly, giving the children the confidence to try new activities and become more independent. Consequently, the children are relaxed and well-behaved, and make good progress in their learning and development. Parents hold the nursery in high regard. Policies and procedures are largely thorough and are effective at keeping children safe. The light and spacious new accommodation is used well by the experienced and well-qualified staff and the improvements made since the last inspection are evidence of the nursery's good capacity to continue developing in the future.

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

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

- refine the process for self-evaluation, with a sharper focus on the impact of the nursery provision on the children's learning

- review the programme of fire drills so that all children, whatever their pattern of attendance, experience regular evacuation drills.

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

Staff see the children's safety as their highest priority. They have all undertaken recent safeguarding training, so they are alert to possible indications of mistreatment and know who to contact should the circumstance arise. All policies and procedures are updated regularly and staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their roles. The accommodation is secure from intrusion. Visitors sign in on arrival, and all adults working with the children have been checked for suitability and vetted. Staff carry out regular and annual risk assessments of the nursery accommodation, surroundings and equipment. They also conduct separate assessments before children are taken out on trips to the local area. The nursery has a good range of thorough procedures for occasions when children might not be collected at the expected time, or when an unauthorised person might seek to collect a child. Staff are meticulous in recording any administration of medicines or minor bumps and bruises. Together with the adjacent school, the nursery holds regular fire drills and carefully records them. However, while there are currently no children attending only for afternoons, the present fire drill record does not specify clearly enough the weekdays on which drills have been held, so it is possible that some children have not experienced them.

The nursery is led with enthusiasm, commitment, and professional insight. There has been a very thorough programme of staff training since the last inspection, in areas such as paediatric first aid, and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. The recommendations of the last inspection have been acted upon very successfully. This has resulted in improved planning of activities, a very thorough process to check each child's progress over time and greater involvement of parents in the nursery's life. Parents are represented on the management committee and the nursery seeks wider parental participation through a regular survey of parents' views. An imaginative notification to parents informs them about the main learning themes to be followed in the coming half term, and the kinds of activities they might like to undertake with their own children to enrich the programme further. This is an example of how the parents and staff work well together for the children's benefit. Parents' appreciation of the nursery is reflected in comments such as, 'he loves coming and misses it when it is not open' and, 'she can already write her name and has improved ever so well'. Parents comment on the confidence they feel in staff's care for the children, and the ease of communication they have in the event of any problems. Links with the adjacent primary school are also good. Staff from both sites liaise well when children transfer and the nursery is able to draw on school facilities when it needs them. The manager is a committee member of the recently established children's centre and together these effective links provide children and families with a full range of support.

Staff ensure all children can benefit from the nursery programme, whatever their age or ability, and they rightly pride themselves on building children's individual

ideas and interests into the weekly activity plans. The process of shaping the provision to meet the needs of each child and to ensure full inclusion, is helped by a very good key person scheme. Parents know from the beginning who their child's key person is, and build good links with them over time. The key person has lead responsibility for collecting and organising the evidence of each child's progress and welfare, and making sure there are no unforeseen gaps in their learning programme. The management committee and staff work well together and accurately identify the main strengths and areas for improvement of the nursery. They are currently developing a more formal self-evaluation system. Although this is at an early stage, it paints an accurate picture of the provision the nursery makes for its children. However, it lacks detail about the direct impact of its activities on the learning and development of the children and so does not provide staff with a full picture of the setting's progress.

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

Children's enjoyment of the nursery is clear because they happily bound into the playroom when it opens in the morning. A good range of materials and equipment is set out for them on arrival and most already know how they want to start their day. A large wooden fort attracts a group of children. They dismantle its battlements, reassemble them in a different way and use the small toy figures as an invading army. Children then add an extra dimension to the play by dressing in suits of armour from the role play corner. They use appropriate vocabulary, such as 'weapon', 'attack' and 'army'. Throughout the play session children listen to each other's ideas and have learned to take turns. Other children rush to a table of coloured dough, where an adult chats with them as they try to use the materials to make imitation plates of food. Children are encouraged to be creative by drawing flowers. They start by sketching a round centre and then add six petals and a stem. Staff praise the children, who are then encouraged to produce many more flowers. Other children curl up on cushions or the carpet, where an adult shares a book with them. They enjoy chatting about the pictures and about what may happen next in the story. The children move keenly and independently around the varied activities, adapting them for their own purposes.

Staff are available to provide support when needed and are skilled in drawing out conversation, which will open new learning possibilities, while respecting the children's initiative. Where children show a particular interest, staff make a note and at the weekly staff meeting plans are adjusted to enable these individual preferences to be followed up. Some children's recent interest in cooking has led to an adult-initiated activity where children are helped to make fruit kebabs and smoothies. Children know they must have clean hands to prepare food and they chop the fruits carefully and safely because staff supervise them well and offer advice. As they create their kebabs they chat freely about fruit and vegetables, the types of food which are good for them and other cooking experiences they have had. This gives the children a good understanding of healthy eating. Activities, such as cooking, growing plants, celebrations of different cultures and breeding butterflies from caterpillars have been planned in response to children's interests. These effectively capture the children's curiosity and broaden their understanding

of the world about them. Staff have developed a good system for recording the progress each child makes in each of the six key areas of early years learning. These records, and the photographic evidence staff retain, show that children progress well during their time in the nursery.

By the time they leave the nursery, most children have begun to recognise letters and sounds, are able to write their own names, and know how to handle a book correctly. They count small groups of objects and understand comparative terms, such as 'bigger' and 'smaller', 'more' and 'less', and 'older' and 'younger'. They enjoy the different sounds made by a collection of percussion instruments and make vibrant original paintings by mixing their own colours. They have good hand control with pencils or scissors and show good balancing skills on a range of outdoor apparatus. They know a lot about life and growth from breeding butterflies and from listening to a visiting mum who brought in her new baby for them to see. Children are encouraged to feel safe and show concern for others because staff give them clear reminders to act responsibly and offer explanations about dangers and how to avoid them. The learning programme children enjoy at the nursery encourages them to be independent learners, who are friendly and helpful to others. The personal, social and academic skills and attitudes they learn in the nursery will serve them well in their future 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

<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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## **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