

Inspection of St Paul's Pre-School

The Presbytery, St. Pauls RC Church, Hazelgrove Road, Haywards Heath, West
Sussex RH16 3PQ

Inspection date: 18 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle quickly into this welcoming pre-school, where staff build nurturing and responsive relationships with them. For example, when children arrive, staff use familiar routines and engaging activities to help children feel at ease. They warmly interact with children in shared play, such as rolling and moulding autumn themed play dough and exploring natural seasonal objects. This supports children's fine motor skills, creativity and confidence.

Staff create an inclusive environment for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. For instance, children delight in shared group times, where they confidently join staff in singing and signing colours of the rainbow. This supports all children's communication and language development. Staff sensitively support less-confident children to join in with walking, tiptoeing and hopping around the room. In the garden, staff support children to balance and climb on beams, stepping stones and a climbing frame. All the while, staff give gentle encouragement and praise. This helps strengthen children's physical development and creates a sense of belonging, where all children feel included and valued.

Staff consistently foster a kind and respectful atmosphere. For example, they support children to wait patiently for their turn, encourage the use of polite language, such as please and thank you, and guide them to share during group activities. Children play well and show consideration for each other.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders shape a clear and ambitious curriculum based on children's individual needs and interests. Staff work closely with parents to understand children's starting points. They regularly assess children's progress and review the learning environment to match support to all children's needs. This promotes an inclusive setting, where learning is meaningful, building on children's knowledge and skills over time.
- Staff provide strong support for children's language and communication development. They model and introduce useful vocabulary during play, and ask questions to extend children's thinking. They use strategies such as signing and visual cards, to enable all children to understand and join in. Children benefit from small-group sessions, such as activities where they wait with excitement as staff skilfully guide their discovery of a new toy, and introduce new words. This supports children listening and attention skills, and helps to strengthen their focus.
- Independence is strongly promoted throughout the day as staff help children to quickly learn consistent routines. For instance, on arrival, children put away their

packed lunches and water bottles and move their names to register. At snack time, they choose their fruit and butter crackers with growing skill. These small, repeated actions support children's confidence, strengthen their self-care skills and prepare them for the next stage in their learning and for starting school.

- The pre-school generally supports children in beginning to recognise and value their similarities and differences. For example, families are invited to share traditions, children learn about some cultural festivals, and planned activities occasionally prompt children to notice and talk about what makes them unique. However, this is not fully established as part of staff's day-to-day practice, to help ensure that diversity is consistently reflected and celebrated in the setting.
- Overall, partnerships with parents are positive. Staff make time to speak with families during drop off and collection, and regularly share updates via email. They discuss children's progress and offer guidance for home learning at termly meetings. However, staff do not always identify when to adapt communication methods to ensure all parents have the information they need.
- Leaders prioritise staff development, organising targeted training that reflects the varied needs of children across the setting. They actively seek advice from external professionals, such as speech and language therapists and specialist teachers. They then support staff in applying this guidance in their daily interactions with children. This collaborative approach helps build staff confidence to deliver targeted support for all children, including those with SEND and who speak English as an additional language. This fosters all children's well-being and enables them to make good progress.
- Leaders are mindful of workload pressures and create time for staff to complete training and paperwork, both during the working day and at home. Staff comment that leaders are approachable, flexible and supportive. This helps staff to feel valued and happy in their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- strengthen communication strategies to ensure all parents can access and understand the information shared
- embed opportunities for children to explore and celebrate cultural diversity.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY248608
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10399226
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP521083
Telephone number	01444 473940
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

St Paul's Pre-School registered in 2002 and is located at St Paul's RC Church in Haywards Heath, West Sussex. The setting is open during term time, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4pm. The setting offers government funded places for children aged two, three and four years old. The setting employs twelve members of staff, including nine who hold relevant early years qualification at level 2 or above. This includes one member of staff with qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Sophia Malcolm

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and the children.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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