

Mill News



Playgroup is Outstanding!

We know that our Playgroup is very special - and now it's official. Our latest Ofsted inspection returned the verdict, 'Outstanding' in every category, after a surprise visit earlier this month.

The inspection report recognises that:

Children feel safe and secure in this exceptionally inclusive setting. An excellent understanding of children's individual needs and highly effective partnerships with parents ensure each child makes the best possible

progress in learning and development. Staff are highly skilled in offering personalised support for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The report warmly describes children who chat happily with each other and staff, children choosing their activities with great enjoyment and children thriving.

It mentions parents enthusiastic about the high level of care at Playgroup and the

(Continued on page 2)

Romsey Mill is a Christian charity dedicated to creating opportunities for change with young people, children and families in Cambridgeshire—including teenage parents, young people with autism, families with small children, and young people experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage!

Words from the Chief Executive

Romsey Mill's work is multi-dimensional.

There is breadth in our activities. We work with people from a range of backgrounds across the wide area of Cambridge city and South Cambs, creating a variety of opportunities. The stories in *Mill News* reflect this breadth.

Romsey Mill's work is long-term. Relationships take time to grow. We know that change also takes time and we invest in the lives of young people and families over months and years.

There is depth in our work. Most of the young people, children and families with whom we journey face significant difficulties. We work intensively with these people, helping them to overcome challenges. On page 7 we describe how we safeguard young people and children who are particularly at risk.

Carlo Carretto describes the importance of

love in determining actions: *It is love that gives things their value... It is love that must determine our actions... Love is the synthesis of contemplation and action, the meeting point between heaven and earth, between God and [humanity].*



At Easter we can reflect on God's multi-dimensional love and 'grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge'. It is this love that inspires the work of Romsey Mill and enables us to create opportunities.

May we be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God

Cont. from front page

excellent communication between them and staff that facilitates the best possible care for the children.

There are thirty-one children on roll at the Playgroup. We have three one-to-one workers supporting children with special educational needs, and nine children who have English as an additional language. Seven staff members are supported with additional help from eighteen volunteers and students.

Playgroup's reputation is already so good that there are thirty names on the waiting list for September.

Rachel Matthews, who has led the Playgroup for the past twenty years, said, 'This is an amazing tribute to the hard work of an outstanding team. We're delighted that our work with families in this part of Cambridge has been recognised in this way.'

Chief Executive Neil Perry said, 'We are delighted that this Report recognises the excellent quality of provision provided by Romsey Mill's skilled and caring staff team. We're grateful for the partnerships with parents, families and the wider community that enhance our work. Romsey Mill will carry on taking steps to maintain our outstanding Playgroup provision, to ensure that children in our care continue to thrive.'

Staff and managers are passionate about their roles and strive to bring about change.

Children thrive in this inclusive and welcoming setting.

View the report in full by visiting: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

Love learning literacy

Progressions work in the Young Parents Programme this term has seen eleven young women taking an accredited literacy course. Attendance has been excellent and the young women are committed to learning. Fiona commented, 'I am determined to do well in life even though I failed at school. I am more focused with this course.'

Achieving this comes through one-to-one encouragement and groundwork before the course started from Bekki Clark, Progressions Worker. Sessions are delivered by Family Learning tutor, Angela, with the invaluable support of Bekki and volunteers Anthea and Jen.

One of the young women, Chloe, wrote:

'At school my priorities were meeting my boyfriend and working to earn money. I didn't think GCSEs were of any

importance.

'Now that I've grown up, I see the importance of these skills. The literacy course has helped me because there is childcare, more one-to-one learning and it's on just the one day a week. This has all helped me to stay focused.

'I hope to go on to college and study childcare.

'I feel like I've regained the enjoyment of learning and realise it's not such a chore as it used to be.'

You may have heard Chloe speaking about her experiences as a young mum, on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire's Sunday Breakfast Programme, on Mothering Sunday.

Enterprising students get a taste of the Press



Students spent a morning at Cambridge University Press, researching the business, getting to know an enterprising individual, and conducting an audit of business skills as part of their Enterprise Award.

The four year 10 students attend Step-Up classes at Romsey Mill, designed to give young people aged 14-16, who are struggling in mainstream education, alternative opportunities for a successful future. The Enterprise Award is part of the Step-Up programme.

Heidi Mulvey, Head of Community

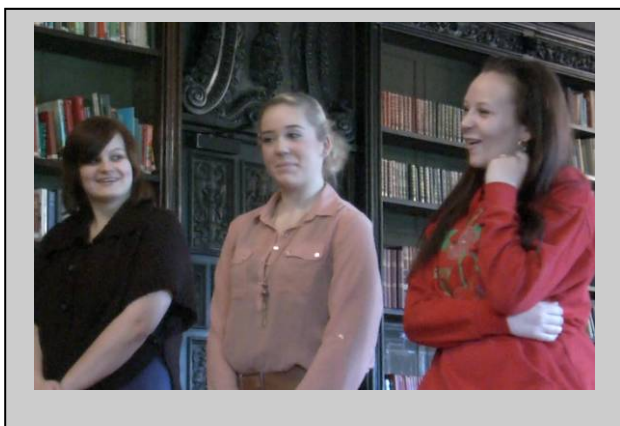
Engagement at Cambridge University Press, talked to the students about the history of the Press. John Lloyd, Health and Safety Advisor, got them up to speed on the challenges of site management. And Ian Collier, Digital Operations Manager, inspired them by talking about his work developing apps for the Press.

Dave Shuler, who leads the Step-Up group at Romsey Mill, said: 'The young people enjoyed learning about the Press and it was great to hear about Ian's life and career path. We learned more than enough to complete this module of the Award.'

Heidi Mulvey added: "We enjoyed meeting the young people. It's always useful for us, explaining what we do to people, and seeing our familiar environment through fresh eyes."

To find out more about Romsey Mill's Step-Up classes or to get involved go to <http://www.romseymill.org/step-up/>

Three in the Dragon's Den



Terri, Rosie and Sheona successfully bid for £750 from the Young Lives Dragons' Den initiative. They will consult with young women to identify their key needs and put in place training and mentoring support in response as well as creating a resource pack to be used by professionals and young women.

As an added bonus, the project will enable the three dragon-slayers to work towards an ASDAN Platinum Youth Achievement Award and a Cambridgeshire Youth Work Award. And as a bonus for Kate Nation, Romsey Mill's Young Women's Worker, the three will be involved in the delivery of work with young women during the coming year—a development of their work as members of a participation group at Romsey Mill.

'They did a great job at pitching to the panel and I'm really proud of what they have already achieved,' said Kate.

One of the three was so nervous before the event that she almost ducked out. On leaving the dragons' lair, having been persuaded to take part, she said, 'I'd do that again!'

A nice ending to the evening was bumping into a CUP staff member in a taxi on the way home, when the young women had the chance to thank him for the Press's support.

Learning to be friends

A year 9 girls' group, which has been meeting for the past three years at The Manor, is taking part in a photography project this term about what makes a good friend, leading to a scrapbook of their time together and the progress they have made at school and with each other.

Three years ago, some of the girls were on the verge of exclusion from school because of their disruptive behaviour. They were constantly arguing and were unable to form stable relationships. Their actions were spilling over into home life. They said, 'Our parents would argue because of us.'

As a result, this Girls' Group was set up, with a focus on how to make, and keep, good friends. The girls said, **'We play teamwork games that help us with our friendships. It's awesome, exciting and fun.'**

The outcomes include greater peace at

home: 'If it wasn't for Girls' Group, we would still be arguing and so would our mums.'

The girls are still in school and making progress, having benefited from support during and after the move from primary school. Strong, positive friendships are key to having a successful experience of school.

The Transitions Programme works with young people up to the age of 14 so the photography project will be a nice way to capture and keep the good memories from three years of work and progress.



Aspire family support



New Parent Support Worker for Aspire, Karen Hosking, spent an inspiring day with Vodafone's World of

Difference team, hearing Gok Wan speaking to a new cohort of Vodafone-funded volunteer workers about his passion for charitable work.

Karen has begun a four-month contract to develop support within Aspire with families who have a child or children with an autistic spectrum condition. Karen is familiar to Aspire parents, who have benefited from her

experience and guidance, and this post will give her dedicated time to devote to the work.

Karen says, **'I'm really excited to be taking part in the World of Difference programme and looking forward to supporting Aspire families facing issues similar to those I've worked through myself.'**

Family participation within Aspire is part of Karen's wide-ranging brief, and includes work with siblings, who often have particular needs arising from having a brother or sister with special needs.

We would love this post to continue beyond the four-month Vodafone funding. If you would like to support it, please get in touch with the development team on 01223 566492.

Boys to Men—Batman or Bond

'I don't want to stay stuck. I want to move on.'

Just over halfway through a 12-week course for young men, including young fathers, has seen 7 out of 8 participants move from being not in education, training or work to employment, college or apprenticeships.

This remarkable success comes out of a course designed to support the physical, emotional and spiritual development of young men, encouraging them to grow from 'Boys to Men.' Sessions address the personal and professional qualities needed for the young men to take responsibility for their relationships, education and work.

Development workers encourage the young men to be 'Batman or Bond': the idea being that these heroes plan ahead rather than being driven by circumstances.

They have just returned from a residential in Norfolk where the aim was to have space and time to reflect on life and goals. One young father, inspired to take action, is looking for

ways to improve baby changing facilities for fathers in his local park.

Another reflected, **'It's helped me to step back and think instead of just reacting to what happens.'**

The course offers these young men exciting potential for change, to do what they aspire to. 'I need to do something useful with my life,' said one participant. Now, because of 'Boys to Men', he is doing just that.



Change is catching



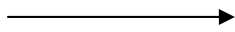
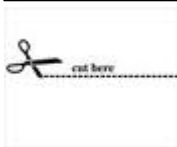
Ashley's enthusiasm for life has been transformed through his attendance at Step-Up alternative education courses at Romsey Mill and work experience in Romsey Children's Centre. His positive attitudes are now benefiting the children with whom he works.

Ashley joined the Step-Up alternative education programme in September this year, having been involved in groups for a number

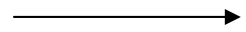
of years. He made a strong start to the course, though he is not in mainstream school having been excluded a number of times. Reflecting now, he described his previous behaviour as 'appalling'.

As well as seeing Ashley at Step-Up, staff set up a work experience placement for Ashley at the Children's Centre, where Ashley has excelled. He brings a calm, considerate and fun presence to the Children's Centre and has delighted both children and staff. In particular, Ashley has helped one young child with an autistic spectrum condition to engage with the sessions in a more fulfilling way. His work led to a 'break through moment' with the child while reading.

Ashley is working towards a Level 1 Diploma in Uniformed Services as well as completing two days of work placement each week. He has recently signed up for extra volunteering hours, starting a career path towards becoming a qualified youth worker.



Response form



Please contribute to Romsey Mill's work:

£15 pays for one hour of a youth worker's time to develop skills with a group of young people

£25 pays for one session of accredited learning for one young person

£30 pays for one young person to attend an Aspire club session

£40 pays for youth workers to run a 2-hour session of late night football, developing skills and decreasing antisocial behaviour

£150 pays for a young parent to attend an eight-week antenatal course

Cheques payable to 'Romsey Mill Trust'.

I am sending a donation for

£15 £25

£30 £40

£150 Other amount £

Name and address

.....

.....

Please sign below to Gift Aid your donation

I am a UK taxpayer and want Romsey Mill Trust (RMT) to reclaim tax on my gift. I understand that what I pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount RMT claims in the same tax year. I will advise RMT if these details change.

Signed:

Please cut off this form and return with your cheque to:

Romsey Mill, Hemingford Road, FREEPOST
CB1067, Cambridge, CB1 3YD

Keeping children and young people safe

At Romsey Mill we rightly focus on the positives—on the progress children and young people are making. For some, however, it is hard to see positives when there are some very challenging situations behind their lives. How we support children and young people at acute risk is part of the story of achieving positive outcomes.

We are committed to methods of work with children, young people and families that live out a Christian worldview. We believe that all people are created by God in his image and are of utmost value to him. We share the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Children must be **protected** from all forms of violence and exploitation
- Everyone has a **responsibility** to support the care and protection of children
- We **listen** to children and young people, respect their views and respond to them directly
- Children should be **encouraged** and enabled to fulfil their **potential**
- We **challenge inequalities** for children and young people
- Every child must have someone to turn to.

We take seriously the welfare of all children and young people involved in our activities and programmes. Through our work we aim to prevent any physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of children and young people.

We have two designated Child Protection Officers: the first ports of call for staff made aware of a situation of concern. We build a picture about a situation, recording concerns and maintaining support, but certain situations require immediate referral to Social Care if the child or young person is deemed to be at risk of harm.

Situations facing people with whom we work might include physical or emotional neglect of

a young child; or a young child in danger because a violent partner lives in their household. Young people might be made homeless because of domestic violence or the breakdown of family.

Working alongside children, young people and families at risk of experiencing sexual, physical or emotional abuse means that staff need up to date training and support to respond appropriately to each situation. We work closely with the social care team who value our work:

'I have found staff at Romsey Mill to be committed, dedicated and approachable individuals who thrive working with children, young people and their families. The Young Parents Programme in reaches those within a specific age bracket who often require one-one-support. I have found that in the cases I have worked with, the outcomes for children involved are improved, which in my experience is a direct result of the intervention provided by Romsey Mill.

'I have found individuals within this service particularly skilful at engaging hard to reach young people. Romsey Mill provides a useful and inclusive service to those in need, a service which is particularly valued by families and professionals within Social Care.'

This work is demanding but there are positive outcomes. Recently a number of children have been removed from the child protection register, their situations improved, due to work we have been involved in alongside other professionals.

Romsey Mill works by developing relationships; we are here for the long term. Staff support children, young people and families through their times of most acute need. They work with other professionals towards safer futures for everyone.

[Donate now](#)

Please donate now to support the work of Romsey Mill. You can write a cheque and send it to us, or [donate online via our website](#).

Staff news

Farewells

Tom Laws is leaving us to help develop a Fundraising and Communications department at Wolfson College.

Jacqui Sheppard, who has worked in Playgroup for seven years is moving to Homerton Nursery School.

We're also saying goodbye to *Dave Inniss*, SIP sessional worker.

Hello again

Diane Hicks rejoins the fundraising team as Community Fundraiser and Volunteer Coordinator; *Karen Hosking* is Parent Support Worker in Aspire;

Matt Howell returns, as north city Development Worker in SIP; *Tom Scotter* rejoins the SIP team in north Cambridge as a sessional worker.

Hellos

We're pleased to welcome several new staff to the team: *Helena Forrow* is a new one-to-one support worker in Playgroup, *Melissa Freeman* joins us as Family Outreach Worker, *Charity Green* is our new Corporate Fundraiser, *Claire Lea* joins us as Major Donor Fundraiser.

Children's Centre

Rachel Bennett is now on maternity leave. We wish her well and look forward to hearing news of baby Bennett's safe arrival. *Eva Acs* will cover Rachel's leave, as Children's Centre Manager. Eva is well known to us at Romsey Mill and is being seconded to us from Cambridgeshire County Council for three days a week.

Thank you *Lush* for providing free hand and arm massages to young women presenting Romsey Mill vouchers—part of celebrating International Women's Day 2012 on March 8th. (And for donating some delicious products.)

London Marathon

Ex-Aspire volunteer, Rob Payne is running the London Marathon on 22nd April to raise money for our Aspire Programme. Rob has set the ambitious target of £5000. Please help him towards this target at: <http://www.justgiving.com/rob-payne>

We're now on Facebook and Twitter



<http://www.facebook.com/romseymill>

<http://twitter.com/#!/romseymill>

Have a look at our website - www.romseymill.org