

St Thomas' After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110493
Inspection date	02 October 2006
Inspector	Rosemary Davies
Setting Address	Woolton Hill, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 9XF
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Registered person	St Thomas' After School Club
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Thomas' After School Club opened in 1999. It is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of children at the club. It operates from rooms within St Thomas' Infant School in the village of Woolton Hill, near Newbury, Berkshire. The club has use of a classroom, main hall, library and associated kitchen and toilet facilities, together with a secure outdoor playground. The children who attend the out of school club come from either the infant school itself or the nearby junior school; the club is open to children from other schools.

The club opens each weekday from 15.15 until 18.00, during school term times. There are currently 48 children on roll, aged from four to 11 years. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The club employs seven part time staff of whom three have appropriate early years qualifications. Regular support is received from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well overall at this club. Children benefit from daily fresh air and have particularly good opportunities to take physical exercise in the spacious playground. They engage in a variety of outdoor games, developing ball control skills individually or playing together, such as with 'parachute play'.

Children use a hygienic and very clean environment. The school is cleaned professionally and staff ensure children use clean tables, cutlery and crockery at meal times, following stipulated procedures. Food is stored appropriately, with the club having its own refrigerator to keep any perishable items fresh.

Children follow good personal hygiene procedures, understanding why they must wash their hands before eating and doing so willingly and unprompted. They know too, what constitutes 'healthy eating', stating that sweet biscuits are not good for them, although these are provided as a snack. There is a tendency too, to offer sweet sandwich fillers unnecessarily. Nevertheless, children enjoy choosing from a wide selection of fresh fruit and know that this healthy option is better for them. They help themselves to fresh drinking water whenever they wish and staff encourage them to take drinks as soon as they come to the club. Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure any special dietary needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use an extremely welcoming and child-friendly environment. Staff prepare rooms before children arrive and make a wide range of good quality equipment and resources available to them. These resources are stored methodically and if children request something different, items are quickly located.

Children are kept safe when in the care of this club. Staff undertake risk assessments to determine potential dangers to children's safety and do all they can to minimise these by following stipulated routines carefully. Children learn to keep themselves safe. When being collected from the junior school, older children know where they must meet staff and that they cross the road when told to by the 'lollypop lady'. They walk sensibly along the pavement, understanding the dangers of passing traffic. Staff remain vigilant for children's safety, moving them to a different room whilst a workman repairs a broken window pane.

Staff maintain all necessary paperwork to help keep children safe in emergencies, such as written parental consent for emergency medical care. They record accidents and monitor these to check for any recurring incidents in order to eliminate them. They do not take the names of any witnesses to accidents. Staff understand their responsibilities for protecting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children delight in the interesting range of experiences offered in this club. They quickly make decisions about whether to play indoors or outside, being happy and settled in familiar

surroundings. Staff devote themselves to the children's needs, ensuring that these are met by organising sessions sensibly so that children get a snack when they arrive and tea much later, for example. Children can be as energetic as they wish, many choosing to play outside for much of the session. Others simply want to rest for a while and watch television or play on the computer, after the busy school day.

Staff fully support the children's activities, joining in games if children wish. They seek the children's views on what the club should offer them through the 'Children's Questionnaire' and act on the information received. This is one of the reasons children so enjoy attending the club, as they play with games and activities which they have requested. Each term children enjoy a range of special activities, again chosen by themselves, such as a 'Cinema Night' in which the school hall is used to show a suitable video, 'tickets' are produced, popcorn provided and hot-dogs eaten for tea afterwards.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children receive a warm welcome in this club. The very favourable adult to child ratio means that children receive much individual care and attention. Staff communicate well with parents to find out children's particular needs before children start attending. They provide parents with useful information about how the club runs, how they may be involved and what is offered to the children.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff use consistent methods following the Behaviour Policy and promoting the same values of 'encouraging mutual respect' as the school. Relationships are also extremely good, being relaxed and friendly. Children approach staff readily for help and support or to ask them to join in with particular games. Children's self-esteem is raised by their involvement in decision making about what is offered. They benefit too by being on the school premises and seeing wonderful displays of the world around them and the different lifestyles within it.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The supervisor and committee work together well to appoint staff who are suitable for their roles and cleared to work with children. Senior staff make good use of their knowledge, skills and experience to support less experienced colleagues. In particular, the supervisor takes responsibility for staff induction and ensures new staff understand what they can and cannot do. She deploys staff well so that adult to child ratios are maintained and children are able to choose whether to play indoors or outside as a result. Staff work together as an effective, efficient team so that sessions run smoothly.

A full range of policies and procedures is in place that provides the underpinning framework for keeping children healthy, safe and well stimulated. The complaints procedure requires updating to reflect most recent legislation; the supervisor is unsure how long such records must be kept. Nevertheless, all required documentation is kept methodically, securely, confidentially and ready for inspection. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for which it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the club was required to address two recommendations. These related to recording children's attendance and to providing parents with details of the regulating body. The club has addressed both issues successfully. Registers now kept appropriately, which helps keep children safe in possible emergencies and parents are given Ofsted's up to date contact details, should they wish to use them.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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):

- update the written complaints procedure to reflect the most recent legislation
- further promote children's good health by re-considering the range of foods offered to children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk