



St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507912
Inspection date	20 September 2006
Inspector	Fran Fielder
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Registered person	St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery opened in 1999. It is run by trustees and operates from a prefabricated building in the grounds of St Thomas-a-Becket Infant School. The facilities include two classrooms, cloakrooms, toilets and storage rooms. There is a secure outdoor play area with tarmac and artificial turf. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 term time only.

There are currently 60 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves families from the local and surrounding area and children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff who work with the children all of whom hold an appropriate qualification. There is also an administrator who deals with all personnel matters and general paperwork.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn about good personal hygiene. Staff monitor children to ensure they wash their hands before eating, after messy play and after visiting the toilet. Liquid soap and paper towels help prevent cross infection. Staff are good role models and ensure they wash their hands at appropriate times. This ensures children learn good habits from an early age.

Parents supply lunches and receive detailed information on healthy packed meals. This ensures children enjoy a well-balanced meal. Children develop healthy eating habits and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time such as banana, apples, oranges, grapes and kiwi. Children talk about their favourite fruit and have the opportunity to try foods from other cultures such as rice dishes and humus. This gives them a range of healthy options from which to choose. Children have milk or water to drink with their snack. All have their own named water bottle that they can access at all times. This keeps children healthy and prevents dehydration. Topics such as 'All about me' focus on health and bodily awareness so children learn the need for healthy foods, regular exercise and sufficient rest. This ensures children develop a healthy lifestyle.

Children and staff are very enthusiastic about physical play. Staff see exercise as a very important part of child's development to ensure future good health. Children enjoy music and movement sessions in the hall and learn to move in different directions. They enjoy hopping, stretching and discovering what their bodies can do. Outdoors they play on large equipment and are particularly good at balancing, climbing and jumping. Children have good special awareness and ride around on wheeled toys weaving in and out of obstacles. Children become confident when riding scooters because staff demonstrate and support children while they learn to roll along with both feet off the ground.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a bright and stimulating environment. Staff create lovely displays of children's work showing how much they value individual efforts. There is plenty of space for quiet and active play. The book corner is appealing with soft cushions and children love to sit and share books with friends. Staff invite children to help create displays giving children the opportunity to work on a large scale.

There is a fabulous range of good quality toys and resources. These are suitable for all ages, tastes and abilities. Staff clean and check these regularly to ensure they are safe for children to use.

The premises are secure with a coded entry system. Only the staff know the code and they greet visitors at the door. This means only known adults can enter. A daily check of the premises ensures it is safe for children and a regular formal risk assessment identifies any hazards inside and out.

Staff supervise children when they are playing outside. The large play equipment is stable and the soft surface ensures children's safety when running and jumping. Children enjoy an element of risk without the danger of harm in this very safe and secure area.

Staff have a very good understanding of child protection issues as all staff have attended training. They know the categories of abuse and the indicators. They also know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. This safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, independent and soon become very confident within the nursery. They enjoy positive relationships with peers and staff. Children enjoy inviting friends to join in their games. They share and take turns when playing 'snap' or waiting for their turn on the trampoline. Children concentrate well on self-chosen activities and staff allow children to pursue their ideas. Staff listen carefully to children and particularly successful activities are included in the next day's free play to allow children to explore further. Staff use praise and encouragement to build confidence and make children feel good about themselves.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of how children develop and learn. A well-balanced curriculum and a good range of first hand experiences supports children's development in all areas. Staff interact well with children supporting their learning by asking open-ended questions. This helps children organise their thoughts and extend their ideas. While reading stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' staff show children the pictures and ask whether it is day or night and how they can tell. Staff are enthusiastic about the activities and this makes children keen to join in.

Planning is very good and shows an excellent understanding of the foundation stage of learning. Regular observations ensure staff can identify the next steps for each child. Children have individual targets and receive good support from their key worker.

Children are independent, enthusiastic and curious. They show concern for others and co-operate well on joint ventures. Children take turns in being the leader when lining up and wear a special badge for this job. This helps children understand responsibility and ensures all children have the chance to lead the group.

Children love books and stories and enjoy joining in using props to tell the story. The many labels on boxes and drawers help children understand that print carries meaning. Children chat confidently with staff who introduce good vocabulary, which helps children express themselves

well. Children recognise their names on labels and staff encourage children to write their names on their work.

Children count confidently and many can count into double figures. They count children during circle time and steps during games such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' Children talk about shapes of windows and doors when drawing their houses on a home made floor map. They recognise various shapes and enjoy making these on pegboards. Focussed activities introduce children to simple calculation but staff do not always use daily activities to help children understand this concept.

Children enjoy gardening and exploring with magnets. They look at bugs through magnifying glasses and discuss features of well-known creatures. They collect natural objects such as feathers, cones and acorns. Children use information and communication technology such as telephones and computers confidently and know their purpose. Children learn about their immediate environment by going for walks along the nearby lane. Children learn about different cultures through topics such as 'Houses and Homes'. Visitors such as a nurse, a fire fighter and a police officer introduce children to the people who help within the community.

Children enjoy creative work and use different mediums to express their ideas. They enjoy free painting and make models and collages using different textures and materials. Staff encourage free expression during music and movement sessions. Role-play encourages imagination and allows children to make menus for the restaurant or visit the hairdresser.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff treat children with respect by acknowledging differences and preferences. All children have access to the full range of activities. Children play with many resources that reflect all aspects of society. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude towards diversity. The provision for children who speak English as an additional language is good. Staff learn some words in children's home language and invite parents into the nursery to share their culture. This helps children to understand and appreciate differences.

There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Individual educational plans and close liaison with parents ensures all children's needs are met.

Children learn right from wrong through staff's positive approach to behaviour management. However, staff do not always give reasons for requests for good behaviour. Children behave well and learn to respect their environment. They willingly help to clear away toys and enjoy responsibilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents enjoy social meetings such as coffee mornings where they can get to know staff and see how the setting operates. They receive good information about the foundation stage of learning and can attend training so they know what their children will learn.

There are both formal and informal systems in place to for staff and parents to share information about children's individual progress and development. Children take home reading books and a communication book. This gives parents and staff the opportunity to share information. Staff suggest ways for parents to support children's learning at home. Parents contribute to their child's assessment at parents' evenings. The regular sharing of information enhances children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff organise space well to ensure children gain fully from all activities. Staff deployment is effective and ensures good supervision at all times. There are effective recruitment and induction procedures in place. This means that suitable, experienced and qualified persons look after children.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work very well together and understand their role within the nursery. Regular meetings enable staff to discuss individual needs and feed these into the planning. Staff have non contact time to plan and complete profiles. This means all information regarding children's achievements are up to date. The administrator supports the manager and staff leaving them free to concentrate on providing care and education for the children.

Clear aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education. The manager and staff put together action plans to ensure the outcomes for children are good. Close liaison with the school ensures a smooth transition from nursery to reception class and to year one.

Regular appraisals identify training needs and staff have access to relevant courses. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

All mandatory records are in place to ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. Some documentation lacks detail but staff are fully aware of policies and procedures within the setting. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the nursery agreed to update and amend documentation to bring it in line with the requirements of the National Standards. They also agreed to improve staffing arrangements and qualifications. All required documentation is in place and meets the requirements of the National Standards. This ensures the smooth running of the provision. All staff have completed and appropriate qualification. This ensures children are cared for by knowledgeable adults.

At the last education inspection, the nursery agreed to make regular and detailed observations and to use these to inform the planning. Observations are detailed and reflect children's achievements. Regular staff meetings ensure individual targets can be set. It also shows differentiation to ensure all children are suitably challenged.

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.

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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):

- reinforce good behaviour by consistently giving reasons for requests
- review policies and procedures and the way records are maintained to ensure all relevant information is included

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase the opportunities for children to develop an understanding of simple calculation

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