

Kilnhurst St Thomas Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303242
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Tracey Jane Outram
Setting Address	St. Thomas C of E Primary School, Meadow View Road, Kilnhurst, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S64 5UA
Telephone number	01709 578481
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Registered person	Kilnhurst St Thomas Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Kilnhurst St Thomas Pre School is run by a voluntary management committee. It opened in 1996 and operates from a single-storey community building, which is located in the grounds of St Thomas Church of England Primary School at Kilnhurst. The children have access to a secure outside play area.

There are currently 60 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The group opens during the school term. Sessions times are 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.00 to 14.45 every day. This is with the exception of Monday when the session time is 12.00 to 14.45 and Thursday when the session time is 09.00 to 11.30. There are six members of staff who work with the children, three of whom hold a recognised childcare qualification and three who are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from qualified teachers and staff from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's physical development is effectively supported because they have access to a range of well planned play provision. For example, hand-eye coordination and manipulative skills are effectively enhanced through their participation in activities, such as using scissors, sorting shapes, moulding clay and making patterns in shaving foam. Additionally, the outside play space is well equipped to encourage children to develop their sense of balance and space. The children enjoy running, climbing, pedalling bikes in different directions and using the low-level stepping stones to increase their agility. Overall, good organisation of the outside play space and effective activity planning ensures that the children's social, physical and intellectual needs are successfully addressed.

The premises are clean and members of staff ensure that furniture and resources are frequently washed. Appropriate procedures are in place to effectively reduce the spread of illness in the setting; for instance, children with infectious childhood complaints are excluded from the premises until they do not pose a risk to others. Equally, the procedures for toileting children and changing nappies are hygienic. Staff use protective clothing in order to prevent any incidents of cross infection and they explain to children the importance of washing their hands frequently. Good systems are in place to address children's personal health requirements. Members of staff preserve children's well-being by ensuring that they are served with a healthy range of food and drinks, which are hygienically prepared and suitable to address any individual needs. However, children are not encouraged to serve themselves with drinks and snacks; consequently, this does not support their autonomy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are well ordered to create a bright and child-friendly environment. Posters and examples of the written word are freely displayed along with some examples of the children's artwork. However, this indicates that at times children follow a strong adult lead, which restricts individual creativity.

The children benefit from a structured environment that is set up and equipped to address specific areas of learning. However, due to the limited free space there is no continual provision of paint, sand and water, therefore, staff use curriculum plans to ensure that the children access the resources at frequent intervals. The environment is secure and the use of safety gates means that children are in the sight of staff at all times, therefore, they are unable to access the kitchen or office without an adult. Additionally, the children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe; for instance, they independently sweep up sand and pick up toys from the floor to prevent tripping hazards. Fire safety procedures are good, and the children frequently practise safe evacuation from the building. However, the external door leading to the outside play area presents a threat of children trapping their fingers and staff carrying hot drinks around the playroom is an unnecessary risk to the children's welfare.

Children are safeguarded from possible abuse or neglect through an observant and caring staff team. Child protection guidelines are followed with a confident understanding of the correct procedure to follow should staff need to make a referral to the local investigating agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children demonstrate a very strong sense of belonging within the environment. They are well supported by sensitive staff who provide high levels of reassurance. The children are extremely task orientated, and they show high levels of enthusiasm through their involvement in a range of worthwhile activities. For instance, through modelling with dough, role play, building and using powder paints to explore colour exchange. Staff successfully recognise when to intervene in children's play and when to allow them space to explore independently. The children are talkative and they have very good listening skills. Planning is completed effectively and good links are made to correlate the Foundation Stage curriculum with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

The children are extremely helpful, they actively help staff to tidy away and they know and understand the daily routine very well. Overall, play and learning experiences are maximised to efficiently extend children's imaginative skills, numeracy, language and literacy skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Members of staff are proficient in their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they provide activities and early years experiences that broadly address the six areas of learning. Staff have a good commitment to improvement, and they frequently attend training to ensure progression of the learning programme and outcomes for children. They are keen to work in partnership with a range of other professionals in order to enhance the quality of the educational provision.

The curriculum planning is closely linked to the stepping stones and intended activities are modified to take account of the fact that children are individuals who learn at different rates. Key worker systems are in place and members of staff maintain very positive relationships with the children. They are able to confidently discuss children's development and give many verbal examples of their interests and personal growth. Assessment records are maintained, which detail the children's progression towards the early learning goals. However, observations of children taking part in focussed activities lack personal detail and they do not formally contribute to planning for the next stage in individual children's learning.

The children are extremely confident and they demonstrate very good self-discipline. They understand the importance of cooperating with each other, sharing and taking turns. This is effectively illustrated during pretend play; the children successfully collaborate to devise stories and act out their own narratives using small world equipment, such as aeroplanes, helicopters and fire engines. Their ideas are successfully supported by the inclusion of books alongside the activity. The children are very skilful communicators; they confidently use language to ask questions and make observations relating to what they are doing. For instance, children drawing a picture describe weather patterns and thoughtfully explain that rain and sunshine makes a rainbow. In addition, the children are making excellent progress in the development of their literacy skills. During play, the older and more able children demonstrate their emerging knowledge of letters and sounds. They competently write their own name and form many recognisable letters. In many cases this is accompanied by conversation because the children are eager to demonstrate their capability to sound out the letters which make up their name and other familiar words, such as cat and dog. Most children recognise primary and secondary colours and they are beginning to differentiate between light and darker shades. They explore a range of different textures by using paint, glue, clay and play dough on a regular basis. Music

is an integral part of the daily activities and the children confidently sing along to tapes and begin to develop a good sense of rhythm as they tap, shake and strum a wide variety of musical instruments.

There are countless opportunities for the children to enhance their problem solving skills and numeracy. A dedicated area of the playroom is successfully equipped to encourage the children to sort, recognise patterns, rote count and explore the concept of addition and subtraction. In addition, the children have ample opportunities to explore the concept of capacity and weight. Some three-year-old children competently use balances with small blocks to describe heavy and light. However, the children have fewer opportunities to use the computer.

The children's physical skills are progressing well; they enjoy movement during outside play and benefit from activities, such as marking patterns in foam and using wind wheels. The planning of such interesting activities helps the children to understand how and why things work. The children show some appropriate self-help skills; they put on their own coats, wash their hands and help at tidy away time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children begin to learn about the wider world through the provision of some interesting resources and activities, such as dressing-up, access to topical books and dolls with different skin tones. They also have daily opportunities to engage in non-stereotypical play, which ensures they develop an understanding that gender assignment should not restrict opportunities. All of the children are treated with equal concern. The setting has a robust equal opportunities policy, and members of staff have a positive attitude towards inclusion and providing anti-discriminatory practice. They make all reasonable adjustments for disabled children and ensure that children with learning difficulties are not treated less favourably than any other children attending the setting.

The children's behaviour is exceptionally good. They have excellent concentration skills and they are motivated and inspired to participate in the interesting range of activities provided. The children respond to the sensitive and age-appropriate guidance provided by the staff, which helps them to conform to the simple rules and boundaries. The children talk to each other respectfully and in most instances regulate their own behaviour. For example, as they build towers with bricks they divide bricks fairly and remind each other that they have to share. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents in relation to the nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are informed at the start of a placement that children's development is monitored and they are free to view their children's records at any time. However, parents receive little information about the Foundation Stage. Consequently, the links between home and the setting are not maximised and parents are not included in children's learning or supported to continue some play and learning activities at home.

Members of staff are very friendly and they strive to put parents at ease in order to ease the transition from home. For instance, parents are encouraged to stay with their children until they are totally comfortable with the new surroundings. They display photographs of themselves along with copies of their qualifications to ensure that parents know their names and role within the pre-school. Some relevant written information about the setting is provided to parents, which includes access to shortened versions of several policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting inspires good outcomes for children because they are cared for by a well established staff team, who take positive steps to support children's care, learning and play. For example, they work efficiently to meet national requirements and provide children with a motivating and stimulating range of early years experiences. Clearly implemented procedures, such as obtaining criminal record checks ensure staff and students are suitable to work with children. Additionally, staff regularly attend and update training, such as child protection, first aid and food hygiene. The children's personal records are maintained appropriately; they contain all of the required detail including written parental consent for staff to obtain emergency treatment or advice for children. However, staff do not have a formal system of monitoring late arrivals or early departures from the setting; they rely on parents completing the signing in and out book.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The children benefit from high levels of interaction from members of staff who demonstrate a high commitment to further training. For instance, some members of staff are currently working towards a childcare qualification while others are working towards a foundation degree. Members of staff critically reflect on the nursery education and there is a shared philosophy, which involves all staff working together to enhance children's knowledge by 'building on what children already know'. However, much of the planning for children's individual needs is completed informally between practitioners and entry profiles are not routinely completed.

Good links have been made with the local school, and staff work in partnership with teachers in the Reception class to ease the transition between the two provisions. For instance, they organise their curriculum to enable pre-school children to participate in assembly along with some planned activities that introduce and teach phonics. Similarly, planning for the use of the outside play area, which is completed in conjunction with school teachers, ensures that children access an interesting environment that encourages exploration. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve the systems for employing staff and monitoring students. Subsequently, they have reviewed the recruitment policy and significantly developed the induction procedures. They were also asked to record risk assessments, and revise the child protection policy to include the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff. This has now been successfully completed; therefore, the child protection policy now conforms to national requirements, and the children's safety has been improved.

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):

- arrange snack times to provide children with more opportunities to develop independence and self-help skills (also applies to nursery education)
- take steps to ensure that hot drinks are inaccessible and the external door leading to the outside play area is made safe
- enhance the system of registering children's hours of attendance.

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):

- provide children with more opportunities to develop their use of information and communication technology
- develop the system for completing entry profiles and use the children's assessment records to plan the next steps in children's learning
- take steps to include parents in children's learning.

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