

St. Thomas's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217839
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Inspector	Linda Gail Moore
Setting Address	St. Thomas's Road, Tean, Staffordshire, ST10 4DS
Telephone number	01538 722208
E-mail	
Registered person	Lisa Snow and Lisa Hopkin
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Thomas's Day Nursery was registered in 2002. It operates from three rooms in a detached, single storey building next to St. Thomas's church in Tean. A maximum of 49 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 17.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from birth to four years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 11 full and part-time staff who work with the children. Nine of the staff, including the two managers hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is effectively promoted. There are designated staff responsible for health and safety. They ensure appropriate health and hygiene policies and cleaning routines are in place to guide staff and ensure the premises are clean. Good procedures are in place for nappy changing, staff wear gloves and aprons, changing mats are wiped down after use and staff ensure nappies are disposed of appropriately. The risk of infection is effectively minimised. Staff practise good personal hygiene and promote children's understanding through discussion. Pictorial reminders are also displayed on the bathroom wall. Children wash their hands at appropriate times before meals and after using the toilet, a step is provided and staff remain in close proximity to supervise and offer support.

Children receive appropriate care when they are ill or have an accident as there are clear written procedures in place. All members of staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and administer medication and first aid as required. Accident and medication records contain sufficient detail and are consistently completed with parental signatures. Children enjoy regular opportunities to play outside in the garden. They develop their climbing and balancing skills as they negotiate a variety of equipment such as a small climbing frame and ball pool, see-saws and bikes. This encourages a positive attitude towards exercise. Staff organise games and action songs, for example, children are asked to find shapes cards hidden around the garden or join in with 'what's the time Mr Wolf?'. Suitable furniture and equipment is available in the baby room to promote their fine motor and gross physical development. They can use walkers, a baby gym and a variety of cause and effect toys. Space is well-organised so that babies can pull themselves up and crawl around safely. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. All children requiring a rest are accommodated in the baby room, cots and low beds are available depending on the child's age. Staff sit with them to give comfort as they fall asleep. They continue to monitor them until they wake up. The routine for sleeping all of the children together, should be monitored closely to ensure children's needs are constantly met. Particularly when younger babies do not require a rest at this time.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a range of healthy food and drinks. They can independently access drinks when they are thirsty as water bottles are constantly available. A snack is offered mid-morning and mid-afternoon that includes a choice of fresh fruit. They eat food that is freshly prepared by the cook at lunchtime and she ensures a balanced diet is offered for all children. They eat their meals well and enjoy second helpings if they wish. Children's independence and social skills are effectively promoted at mealtimes as they are given responsibility for completing small tasks such as laying tables with cutlery and cups and pouring drinks. Staff sit with the children while they eat to offer support and encourage the social aspect of mealtimes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is bright and welcoming to children. All rooms are brightly decorated with children's art work and photographs which promote their self-esteem and sense of belonging. There are a good range of toys across the nursery and these are stored and displayed at child-height to create a stimulating environment and promote independence. Space is well-organised with activities arranged so children can move around freely and safely both indoors and outside.

Children are cared for in a generally safe environment. The premises are well-maintained, some rooms have recently benefited from re-decoration and new carpets, this contributes towards the children's safety and comfort. Staff check the outdoor play area before children go outside to play. Risk assessments are completed on all areas and equipment to identify any potential hazards and identify the action taken to address them. There is an effective system for managing children's arrival and departure times. The main door is kept locked, visitors must ring a bell to gain attention and there is a glass panel in the door to view. Only members of staff allow visitors to enter and they are requested to sign in and out. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they participate in activities where they learn about road and fire safety. Staff give reminders during sessions about safety indoors such as to not run around or climb. When departing children are reminded to wait for their parent and hold their hand. Appropriate policies and procedures that relate to safety measures are in place.

Children's welfare and safety is promoted in relation to child protection. The designated person and staff team have a clear understanding of their role and responsibility. Most staff have recently attended child protection training and there are procedures in place to guide staff appropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children settle and are happy in the setting. They separate easily from their carers and are happy and comfortable with the staff, approaching them for a cuddle or to sit on their knee. Children develop confidence as staff praise them appropriately and are interested in what they say and do. They constantly talk to children during play to offer encouragement and foster their self-esteem. Some play sessions offer children a satisfactory range of play that includes creative activities such as painting, sand and Play-Doh, story time, singing, role play and physical play. On these occasions children receive variety and stimulation. However, staff are inconsistent in their planning and implementation for a range of activities. Other sessions provide insufficient activities that fail to capture children's interest insufficiently. When the opportunity is present, children confidently make decisions about what they want to play with and move around their play room freely. The lack of range on occasion means their ability to make any choice is reduced.

The nursery have begun to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Each child has their own 'Birth to three matters' development profile, to record their progress and achievement, however, these are not kept up to date. As a result planning does not clearly identify what individual targets children are working towards and children's progress records are not shared with parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have a basic knowledge of the nursery curriculum and are familiar with the six areas of learning. They attend planning meetings and share responsibility for planning which helps to develop their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff take it in turns to record plans, but this has resulted in gaps when staff have not been available. Activity plans are not easily accessible and not consistently applied, resulting in sessions where activities are limited and do not provide children with sufficient challenge. Planning and delivery of activities does not differentiate for the different ability levels of children. Staff do not consistently extend an activity for more or less able children to keep them interested and involved. Focused activity sheets state the learning intention for children but these are not always clear or appropriate for that activity. Individual profiles are in place

to monitor children's progress, however these are not consistently completed and are not currently used as a tool to identify children's next steps in learning.

Children show interest as they select activities and engage in their play. As they participate they begin to develop their concentration skills and creativity. Their independence is successfully promoted as they go to the toilet and wash their hands independently, they help themselves to a drink of water when thirsty and also help staff to lay the table at mealtimes. They behave well and work harmoniously with others, interacting and running about together happily outside. They use their imagination well when they are playing in the role play area, nursing their poorly dolls or acting as hairdressers on a staff member's hair. Children show interest in books, handle them well and listen with enjoyment and attention to stories shared with staff. They are becoming aware that print carries meaning and can identify and pick out their name on work displayed around the room. Writing skills are emerging as they use the writing table to mark paper. Some children are able to recognise the first letter in their name and more able children recognise all of the letters and write their name independently.

Children are beginning to develop their skills and interest in early mathematics such as counting together as they line up and counting the number of dough shapes they have rolled and cut out. They are beginning to explore mathematical concepts such as addition and subtraction as they use computer games to solve how many teddies are needed to make 10, and how many cups are needed when laying the table at dinner time. Games are used to introduce mathematical language to describe shape, size and position, as children join in with hunt the shape card in the garden. Children explore information technology as they use the personal computer and ably negotiate different screens with the mouse. They are beginning to develop their exploration and investigation skills as they learn about change and develop a sense of time such as drawing a clock and discussing the time they wake up in the morning. Children develop their physical skills outdoors as they balance on a see-saw or climb on the small climbing frame. They can negotiate space and obstacles as they move safely around the play area with their bikes and pushchairs. Children use paint brushes, scissors and one-handed tools well and enjoy painting when able to access this activity. Their imagination is well developed as they play in the home corner and enjoy singing and action songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children feel a sense of belonging and enjoy positive relationships with staff. This helps them to feel confident and settled at the nursery. Information about their care needs and home routine are gathered from parents at the time of placement. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive appropriate support. The nursery has a designated Special Needs Co-ordinator, who links with external agencies to plan and give advice and support to parents.

Children are becoming aware of wider society. A good range of resources are available and topics are covered, for example, Chinese new year when children made lanterns, dragons and participate in food tasting. They learn about different countries flags like Italy and paint them; and are encouraged to bring something in from home that relates to that part of the world for 'show and tell' such as pasta. These activities help children to increase their understanding of diversity and different lifestyles of others. Children understand responsible behaviour and are beginning to learn right from wrong. They follow instructions from staff during the daily routine such as washing hands, tidying away and sitting on the carpet. Children show care and concern for others and help one another and are generally well-behaved. However, when the routine lacks structure it leads to children becoming bored and off task. Staff manage difficult behaviour

appropriately and reinforce good behaviour by drawing attention to it through praise and reward. A suitable written policy is in place.

Staff have developed friendly relationships with parents and children benefit from this. Each child and their family are assigned a 'key worker' and parents are made aware of how the setting operates through a 'handbook' when the child starts, this covers organisational details and health and safety information. Parents are informed about what their children have been doing during the day both verbally and in the form of a daily diary. However, diaries are not always kept up to date and when children depart at busy times, staff do not always enter into discussion. Parents have access to the policies and procedures of the nursery, though these are not prominently displayed. A complaints policy is in place and any complaints received are recorded and made available to parents. However, the complaints log contains insufficient detail. Newsletters had previously been sent out to parents informing them of forthcoming events and activities, but these have not been produced in recent months.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is inadequate. Information is not given consistently to parents, for example, they are not informed of the assessment procedure or given the opportunity to share written records made of children's progress. Staff do not complete initial assessments with parents on entry or record any information about their child's development at home. Parents are given verbal feedback from staff about what children have been doing and given some opportunities to become involved in their child's learning such as a homework book and individual target books. However, these are not used effectively. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is not fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The nursery has appropriate recruitment and induction procedures to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children and that staff have information about their role and responsibilities. Staff attend suitable training courses relevant to their role and identify their own needs through appraisal and supervision. There are clear policies and procedures in place.

The organisation of staff is not fully effective in promoting children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. Ratios are not always met leaving insufficient staff to support the children. Deployment of staff means that staff members are sometimes engaged in tasks that take them away from children during play sessions. As a result children do not always receive appropriate support and attention. However, staff demonstrate a caring nature towards them and give comfort when needed. Staff do not manage their time effectively or give sufficient importance to ensure records and documentation are up to date such as daily diaries, individual target books, developmental profiles and daily registers. Managers do not monitor effectively in order to identify and address these weaknesses.

The leadership and management of funded nursery education is inadequate. The joint proprietors who are also the managers take a large role in the care of children, basing themselves in the nursery rooms and are often counted within the ratios. The staffing level needs to be sufficient at all times to ensure they can be released in an emergency, for extra tasks or to have discussion with parents when needed. The monitoring procedure used to evaluate the nursery education is not wholly effective. Both managers need to improve the system for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the quality of teaching.

Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to develop a suitable range of activities for children in the 'tweenie room' as explained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and ensure that all children under three are stimulated appropriately; ensure records of children's and staff attendance are accurately recorded at all times; ensure that meals and snacks given to children offer more healthy and nutritious options and that drinks are available at all times.

Staff have completed introductory training for the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the setting have acquired new equipment and resources for this age group. However, a suitable range of activities is not consistently offered. Records of children's and staff attendance are not kept up to date. Therefore both of these recommendations have been pulled forward and included within the actions set. Children enjoy healthy and nutritious food and have ready access to drinks at all times. Water bottles are constantly available in the Tweenie and Big rooms and children were observed to help themselves when thirsty. Snack and meals include a choice of fresh fruit and vegetables each day. This has a positive impact on children's health.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to develop further the system for recording assessment and planning to ensure it shows clearly how children are progressing towards the stepping stones and that planning is differentiated for the different abilities of children; plan more effectively to ensure practical activities are used to help children develop problem solving skills and ensure they have regular opportunities to construct and join materials together using a range of tools and techniques; provide increased opportunities for children to use writing as a way of communicating and for a purpose and ensure the area for children to sit and read books is made welcoming and encourages children to use it; encourage children to further develop their self-help skills as part of snack and mealtimes and develop staff's understanding of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and ensure there is an effective system in place to offer appropriate support.

Planning and assessment systems do not demonstrate how children are progressing and how activities are differentiated for different abilities. These recommendations are carried forward and included within the actions set. Children do have opportunities to develop problem solving skills, to construct and join materials together and use writing as a way of communicating and for a purpose. However, these activities are not consistently planned for and offered. This is also addressed within the actions set. Space has been organised to provide a permanent reading area in the big room and a writing table is provided during some sessions for children to self access. This encourages children's interest and enjoyment of books and mark making. Children have good opportunities to develop their self-help skills as part of snack and mealtimes. They take it in turn to carry out simple tasks such as laying the table with cutlery and cups and pouring drinks for themselves. Staff have developed their understanding of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs through training, staff meetings and support from the local authority coordinator. Staff continue to work closely with the coordinator to devise and implement individual education plans for children. This ensures children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received one complaint since the last inspection that staff members were seen inappropriately handling children. A childcare inspector conducted an unannounced visit on

30 January 2007 to inspect National Standards 1 (Suitable person), 2 (Organisation), 11 (Behaviour) and 13 (Child Protection). There was no evidence at the time of the visit to suggest any breach of Standards 1 or 2; however, there was evidence to suggest a breach of Standards 11 and 13 and the following actions were raised: Standard 11, to appoint a named staff member responsible for behaviour management, who is able to provide advice and information to other staff members in relation to behaviour management, and ensure all staff are aware which staff member is responsible for behaviour management. Standard 13, to ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and that all staff are aware of the correct procedure for recording and reporting concerns. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions set and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that children's 'Birth to three matters' development records are up to date and are used to plan for their next steps in learning
- improve access to information for parents in relation to their child's development records, diaries, daily discussion and policies and procedures
- ensure that adult: child ratios are maintained and that staff are deployed effectively throughout the day to support children
- ensure records of children's and staff attendance are accurately recorded at all times

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that planning is consistently maintained, is accessible and is differentiated for the different abilities of children
- ensure that children's nursery curriculum development records are up to date and are used to plan for their next steps in learning

- develop systems to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education
- inform parents of the assessment procedure; ensure initial assessments are completed with parents on entry; seek, value and act upon their views about their children's development, working with them to plan next steps in learning

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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