

# St Thomas Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	218244
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Maxine Williams

<b>Setting Address</b>	Wade Centre, The Avenue, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST7 1AG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 788061
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Thomas Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Nursery (1) opened in 1980 and operates from the Wade Centre in Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week during school term times. Morning sessions take place every weekday from 09.00 until 11.30 and afternoon sessions take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12.30 until 15.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 53 children aged from two and a half to four years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for early education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned routines. They know they need to wash their hands before snack times and after using the toilet. Children's health is well protected by the successful implementation of policies and procedures. Accident and medication systems are fully understood and all records are accurate and up to date. Children's understanding of how to keep themselves healthy is promoted through topics and conversations. They talk about why they have to brush their teeth, what foods are bad for their teeth and why it is important to wash their hands to stop germs spreading. This means that children begin to recognise ways to keep themselves healthy and to take responsibility for their own well-being.

The nursery provides a healthy and nourishing range of snacks that appeal to the children and meet their nutritional needs. Snack times are sociable occasions; children sit down together in small groups to share nutritious foods such as assorted fruit, toast and crackers. Children's independence is promoted as they chop up the fruit to share amongst themselves and butter their own toast and crackers. Staff sit with children and offer assistance, when required. Children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and alternative options are always available. All staff work together with parents to ensure that children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet and making healthy choices. Staff educate children about the benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables and also about foods that are not healthy. Fresh drinking water and milk are available to drink and children also have their own water bottle to access whenever they need a drink. Consequently, children are able to independently meet their own dietary needs.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, which contribute to their good health. Although they do not always have access to the outside play area, regular trips to local attractions ensure they get plenty of fresh air. The main nursery room has a large area which children use for active play, which helps them make progress in their physical abilities. For example, they enjoy playing on the slide, crawling through tunnels, balancing on the seesaw, playing football and riding on scooters, bicycles and in coupe cars. There are also daily organised physical play sessions, incorporating action songs, yoga and 'stretch and grow' sessions. Three and four-year olds excitedly bounce up and down on space hoppers and race around the track, manoeuvring around each other well. They join in the activities with enthusiasm and they develop knowledge of the way activity has an effect on their bodies. All are able to rest and be active according to their needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The nursery consists of one large room, which can be sectioned in the middle for different activities. The nursery has a wide range of good quality and developmentally-appropriate resources which meet safety standards. These resources are organised in an attractive and easily accessible way. Consequently, children are able to independently access resources in order to make decisions about their own play and learning. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, which is paved and safe and suitable for their play and enjoyment. However, this is not always available for children to use as the premises is used by other groups during the day.

Hazards to children are reduced because the staff are attentive and use daily detailed risk assessments to reduce possible dangers. This means that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. Staff monitor access to the premises at all times to ensure that admittance to the premises is controlled. This ensures that the safety and well-being of children is protected. Fire evacuation procedures are good; they are fully understood by both staff and children. Emergency evacuations are practised on a regular basis and a record is made of each fire drill. Children are encouraged to be aware of possible hazards and to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, the setting has had both police officers and a traffic warden visit the provision to talk to children about keeping themselves safe. The staff have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and are aware of the correct reporting procedures. All staff have attended training in child protection, which ensures that they fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are at ease and enjoy their time in the setting's welcoming and comfortable environment. They are given opportunities to choose between a large assortment of toys, books and activities which are interesting and appealing. Staff continually talk to children and react to their language and actions. Children use a variety of ways to respond and express themselves, which contributes to their developing communication skills. For example, staff sit and play with children, showing them how magnets affect each other and how they make other magnets move, to develop their curiosity and exploration skills. There is a good range of equipment and toys to promote imaginative play and children play well together, with resources such as the home corner, kitchen and dressing up clothes. This enables children to develop good social skills. There are a good range of resources in place to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and staff have a secure knowledge of the framework and the appropriate methods to promote younger children's learning and development.

Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they participate in an assorted range of creative, physical and sensory experiences. For example, three-year-olds pretend to talk on the phone and are able to dress themselves in uniforms to represent the current topic of 'People who help us'. They become involved in role-play activities, as they dress up as fire fighters and police officers. All children attending the nursery have produced artistic creations for the previous topic of health, when they learned about what foods belonged to which nutritional group and what they were useful for. They are now in the process of making things for the current topic of 'People who help us', all of the children choose which profession they would like be a part of and then each of the key roles is used to develop children's knowledge of their community and the services that different professions provide. Children take part in songs, rhymes and creative play to help them learn about different insects. They talk about how many legs animals have, where they live and the noises different animals make. Children are relaxed and receive comfort when they are tired or upset. Staff sit with children, help them with their snacks and give cuddles when needed. Consequently children are confident and have good levels of self-esteem.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning contains sufficient detail to enable staff to deliver the planned activities. The planning clearly states what the desired outcome is for each activity and there is a clear expectation of what the learning objectives are. Although all areas of learning are covered in planning, it does not make clear differentiation for the diverse

capabilities of children, in order that activities can be adapted to suit the educational needs of individual children. The system for assessing children's progress is robust enough to record children's levels of progress and assess how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. However, next steps in learning are not identified in either the individual assessments or in planning. Subsequently, not all children's learning needs are always fully extended.

Staff use appropriate means to sustain children's attention, they sit with children, ask questions and help to expand their play and learning in most areas. Children's awareness of the community and the wider world is increased through activities and the positive attitude of the staff. There are topics to help children learn about nature and about how things grow and change through activities, such as going to visit the monkey reserve, going on a bug hunt and growing sunflowers. The children also learn about the importance of preserving the environment by conversations about recycling and visits to the local recycling depot. They take part in different topics, such as animals, seasons, health and 'People who help us'. They talk about traffic and how the different colours of the traffic lights mean different things, such as stop, wait and go. Children's behaviour is consistently managed well and they enjoy being in the calm and caring surroundings. The physical play area is well organised and offers an interesting and appealing environment, decorated in a jungle theme, with a good range of developmentally-appropriate resources.

Children are involved and they enjoy taking part in the available activities. They are secure with the staff and have good self-esteem. They are confident in their play and are interested in the available activities. Children demonstrate consideration and are polite to each other; most children wait patiently to have their turn on the computer and to go to the active area of the nursery to use the bikes and ride-on toys. Their self-help skills are promoted well; they are all encouraged to use the toilet and wash their hands independently and pour their own drinks at snack times. Children's verbal communication skills are good. Most children speak clearly and assertively, discussing their likes, dislikes and home experiences, such as a four-year-old disclosing that they don't like the colour pink, because their Mum wants a baby girl, but they would prefer a puppy.

Children can count confidently and consistently recognise and use numbers to support their play. For example, four-year-olds are able to count up to 10 from memory and are able to recognise written numbers out of sequence, as well as being able to correctly estimate a number of items, up to six, without counting them. There are resources in place for activities such as measuring and comparing, these are used effectively to promote children's learning. For example there are a variety of containers in the water which children are able to use to fill up and empty. Children are able to independently fill and empty them and use the smaller containers to fill the larger ones, talking about which is the biggest and smallest, without prompting. Staff effectively use a variety of resources to extend children's understanding of shape, size and proportions, such as asking which insects are the biggest and smallest and which has the most amount of legs.

Staff spend time reading to children and encourage their understanding and imagination by asking them to recall details of the story relating to their own lives. For example, staff ask children whether they have been to the doctors and if the doctor has ever looked in their ear or used a stethoscope on them. Children are eager to answer, recalling details of their own lives and experiences. New words are introduced to enhance children's vocabulary as a result of each of the topics. Most children enjoy listening to and joining in with familiar stories. They talk about why the big bear has a big teddy and the little boy has a little teddy. Children often self-select and look at books independently, due to the excellent organisation of books and the comfortable area available for children to relax, enjoy quiet time and read books. Most

four-year-old children are able to recognise their own names and some are able to write the initial letter. However, few of the children are beginning to link sounds to letters and letter recognition is poor with most children. This is due to a new system of reading being considered by the nursery, but not yet implemented. Consequently, children's reading and writing skills are not currently being fully extended.

Children enjoy physical play regularly with the good range of play equipment in the physical play area. There are regular opportunities to use ride-on toys and to play physical games. The regular 'stretch and grow' sessions, along with daily active games extends children's development of physical skills, as well as promoting children's knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy. Fine manipulative skills are developing and children demonstrate good control as they use scissors, glue spreaders and pens. Children respond well to a wide range of creative activities. They enjoy making collages of police officers, park rangers and traffic wardens, using felt, tissue paper and glue. Children are confident in naming colours; they are able to say what colours the play dough is and the magnets are and what their favourite colour is. Children learn and join in with songs and nursery rhymes very well. Three-year-olds enjoy singing 'The wheels on the bus', 'Bob the Builder' and 'Spaceman Sid', joining in with the actions and counting down as 'Sid' takes off into space. They have regular opportunities to play with musical instruments and explore musical sounds and rhythm. For example, children use creative session to make their own musical instruments and then are able to use their 'shakers' to join in with the maracas, castanets, bells and drums when they sing songs and play music.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

There are a good variety of activities and resources available to encourage a positive outlook on the wider world and raise children's knowledge of diversity and their understanding of others. The children have opportunities to find out about themselves and each other, and to gain knowledge of the wider world through well chosen resources and activities, such as jigsaws, books, toys, discussion and role play. A wide range of cultural festivals are celebrated, such as American Independence Day, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas. The nursery's policies and procedures promote inclusion for all children. There are a number of children currently attending with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is an identified member of staff who has attended training and who is able to provide support for children with additional needs. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of learning difficulties and disabilities and the nursery also links with outside agencies to assist children in their progress. As a result, children are included and encouraged to be part of the group and their educational development and learning is fully extended.

The nursery has a strong Christian ethos, which is evident in the attitudes of both staff and children. Staff have very good expectations of children's behaviour and there is an emphasis on focusing on good behaviour. Children's self-confidence and sense of worth is developed suitably by staff with use of encouragement and praise during their play. Children take turns and share, they help each other when putting on their aprons for water play and they stop and listen when staff tell them not to run in the nursery and to follow the arrows when riding bikes inside. They enjoy being chosen to help with special jobs, such as using the brush and pan to sweep up the play dough and sand and they take pride in being given stickers to celebrate their good behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents are positive and friendly, children's individual needs are documented and staff are available to discuss any questions or concerns at the end of each session. The

individual routines of children are discussed and recorded to ensure that continuity of care is promoted. There is a complaints policy in place, which is displayed and contains the address of the regulator. However, the parents' poster is not displayed. As a result, parents do not have the telephone number of Ofsted available should wish to comment on the childcare provided. There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place, which are available to parents at the setting. This means that parents are informed about the care their child receives. The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving early education is good. In discussion, parents comment specifically on the good range of information they are given about the educational activities and topics their children are taking part in and how well their children have progressed, since attending the setting. The skills and knowledge of parents are utilised well to assist all children attending the nursery. For example, while doing the topic on 'People who help us', parents of children attending the setting who have relevant careers, such as the police force, are invited in to the nursery to talk to children about their roles in helping people in the community.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. There are clear and effective recruitment and induction procedures in place. Sufficient guidance is given by the management to ensure that staff are clear in their roles and the appraisal system implemented monitors staff performance. Staff delivering early education have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are able to deliver it effectively to ensure that all children are able to progress in their educational development.

Children are comfortable and feel secure in the setting. They are cared for by an appropriately qualified, dedicated team of staff. Staff use the policies and procedures to support the well-being, care and learning of children. All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. However, the staff attendance register is not always completed appropriately; the register is not always completed upon departure for all staff. This means that it is not always clear which adults are caring for children and the hours of staff's attendance is not always accurate. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection it was agreed that the provider should improve the toilet facilities. New toilets have since been built, adjacent to the room used by the children. As a result, children are able to access the toilet facilities independently and have sufficient space and freedom to attend to their own sanitary needs.

At the last education inspection it was agreed that the provider should improve the organisation of snack times and the planning of activities for older children. Snack times are now organised so that children take turns to have their snack, with four or five children taking part at a time. Children are encouraged to cut up their own fruit and to butter their own toast and crackers. Consequently, children are developing in their independence and are learning about the preparation and serving of food. Planning for older children is now satisfactory, children are allocated to key workers according to ability, therefore, older or more able children are placed together, in order that their educational development can be progressed adequately.

## Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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 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):

- obtain and display a copy of the parents poster to ensure parents and carers have accurate information about the regulator, should they wish to comment on the childcare provided
- ensure that the staff register is completed on a daily basis to show 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):

- introduce the use of letters and linking sounds into the daily routine more frequently to ensure older and more-able children are sufficiently challenged in these areas
- use the assessments made of children's progress to help develop the detail in the planning for the next steps in their learning.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)