

St Thomas' Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309787
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Inspector	Carol-Anne Shaw
Setting Address	St Thomas' CE Primary School, St Thomas' Road, St Annes, FY8 1JN
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Registered person	Craftdale Limited
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Thomas' Nursery was registered in 1999 for full day care. It is a limited company managed by the owners. It operates from a purpose built building situated in the grounds of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School in St Anne's. The setting offers full day care for children from two years to five years during term time, with some holiday care when required.

There are currently 35 children on roll, of these, 23 are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The children have access to an open plan area which is divided into different areas of learning. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting has a pet hamster which goes home each weekend with one of the children.

The nursery has six members of staff who work with the children, most have a Level 3 childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a positive attitude to their well-being, they enjoy healthy snacks and know that exercise is important to their good health. The staff work to the clear policies and procedures in place which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. They provide the children with good guidance and support, therefore, children gain a good understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care. The older children are confident in accessing the facilities, for example, washing hands before snack time and after creative activities. Children develop their independence in personal care and are becoming aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Children have very good opportunities to extend and develop their physical control in the well organised, daily indoor and outdoor experiences. This is supported by the staff having a very good awareness of individual children's development through observations and assessments. They have a good understanding of how children develop physically. They encourage and support children to try out new skills and build on what they can do. The children are confident and are able to set their own limits within the safe environment. The older children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise. They enjoy using the outdoor area with its changing challenges. Children use the outside area to effectively support their learning, accessing a wide range of play activities linked to the curriculum.

Children have a good range of healthy options throughout the day; they enjoy a choice of fruits at snack time. Lunch is a very social occasion with their packed lunches served in small groups. Older children have a very good understanding of why they eat healthy foods and how it relates to their bodies. Effective liaison with parents ensures children's individual dietary needs are fully met. Good attention is paid to managing children's medical needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and use comprehensive risk assessment systems to reduce potential hazards. The children learn about protecting themselves, for example, when helping to feed the hamster and the requirement to wash their hands correctly.

Children access a wide range of good quality, safe and suitable toys, resources and equipment, all very appropriate to their age and stage of development. The equipment is effectively set out to enable children to freely access and make individual choices depending on their interests.

Children are very well protected by staff, who all have a good understanding of safeguarding children and work to the child protection policies and procedures. All staff have attended training and are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to safeguarding children and give a high priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe, secure and very happy in the nursery. There are wonderful relationships throughout the setting producing a harmonious and happy environment where the children thrive. This increases the children's sense of trust and helps them develop a strong sense of self. High quality adult-child interactions helps the children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff confidently follow 'Birth to three matters' guidance to provide the younger children with high quality care and education. Staff are very sensitive towards children's needs and recognise the uniqueness of each child. There are highly effective planning and assessment systems in place to ensure the learning programme matches the needs of the individual children. The children experience highly stimulating activities that are skilfully planned to be suitable for their age and interest levels. The young children become engrossed in sensory play with different materials, such as fabric, plastics, wood, metal, tubes and boxes. They are animated and enthusiastic in their play and clap with enjoyment as they link their claps to children's names. This helps them achieve better levels of concentration, language and listening skills and fine motor controls. All children enjoy singing time and happily join in with the familiar songs and rhymes. This activity is further enhanced when the children are given the opportunity to develop their musical talents by guessing the sounds of the percussion instruments. High priority is put upon imaginative play and children learning to play cooperatively with one another.

Imaginative play is encouraged by the staff and the children are very animated as they talk on the telephones or make food in the play kitchen. Sensory experiences are a natural part of the day and staff skilfully include frozen paint into the routine to link with the topic.

Nursery Education

Children enthusiastically enjoy all that they do and are completely engaged at all times. There is a wealth of opportunities for independent learning and directed learning throughout the sessions. For example, children can choose from a range of high quality musical instruments and chatter together about the sounds that the instruments make, or they can join the practitioner and a small group who are making textured snow pictures and talk about colours, textures, shapes and methods.

Children show a high level of independence as they put on their coats and rain boots, help themselves to drinks and access the bathroom. During the activities, the level of concentration demonstrated is excellent and this continues when the group are asked to tidy up. Children happily put items away in the correct place and show that this is another part of the day they enjoy, enthusiastically sweeping and mopping. The behaviour displayed is exemplary. Children sit and concentrate during 'circle time' and listen to the practitioner. During the session, the practitioner encourages children to talk about how they feel about certain things. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent due to the hard work that the practitioners put into meeting the needs of the children.

Children are beginning to recognise their own name and talk about the initial letters of their name or of different words. There is a well stocked mark making area where children sit independently using templates and stencils of letters and numbers, or writing notes and lists. The role play area is an important part of the room where children can develop their literacy and mathematical skills and enjoy innovative ideas, such as a home, shop, hospital and hairdresser. Books are shared and stocks are constantly updated to link with current topics.

Practitioners provide excellent support for individuals, including children for whom English is an additional language. They give one to one support when required, enabling all children to be involved and included in activities provided.

Children show confidence as they count the number of children or the number of ice cubs in the sand. Children concentrate intensely when exploring capacity and enjoy pouring from one container to another. They competently match shapes and colours when tidying up the tools and equipment.

Children learn to explore and investigate and look at changes as they bake or play with the melting ice. They develop a clear sense of time as they discuss what they have been doing at home or where they have been on holiday. They are learning well about the local community and people in the locality with different jobs as parents come to the setting to talk to the children about what they do and where they come from.

The children show an excellent awareness of space as they negotiate the outdoor area, jumping in the large puddle left by the heavy rain. They balance and climb and have opportunities to develop physically through the outdoor and indoor activities on offer. They have the benefit of a wide range of tools including pencils, crayons, paint, shakers, glue spreaders and dough cutters. This enables them to develop their fine motor skills.

Children express their own ideas confidently in creative work using a wide variety of media. For example, snow and ice pictures using collage techniques, textured pictures using sand, and dough models. Children have excellent chances to explore sound through the use of a range of instruments. They enjoy various instruments for free expression and sing and clap rhythms.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Practitioners have an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals which is reflected in their planning and teaching. Their skilful approach in promoting positive relationships and developing children's self-esteem plays a major part in facilitating children's rapid progress in all areas of learning. They use innovative strategies to develop children's self confidence. Throughout the session children's efforts and achievements are celebrated as they are praised continually.

The whole team has a clear knowledge of children's capabilities. They establish children's starting points at the beginning of the Foundation Stage and build on this knowledge. This is ongoing, through observation and assessment of children's learning, and is effectively used to inform the weekly planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are expertly cared for by staff who work exceptionally well with parents to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. Staff demonstrate a very secure awareness of equal opportunities and special needs ensuring children's individual needs are met and they feel included. All children are sincerely and warmly welcomed into the nursery giving them a real sense of belonging. Their work is displayed attractively around the nursery promoting their self-esteem and respect for others.

Children learn to work harmoniously with others as staff effectively support them in sharing and taking turns. In routines, such as feeding the hamster and fish, the children are becoming aware of the needs of other living things. Children make decisions as they choose from a wide,

balanced range of resources. These resources reflect equal opportunities, successfully helping children to become aware of a wider society. For example, a range of dressing up clothes, small world toys, books and instruments. There are positive images displayed around the nursery and the setting actively and successfully celebrates the backgrounds of all the children and of the local community. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

The staff value children's individuality and respect parents' views and contribution to the care provided. Younger children's home routines are fully discussed and staff support parents effectively. The children's behaviour is excellent, the staff show a consistent and caring approach to managing behaviour. The older children follow simple rules and follow the routines and boundaries in place. Children share and show respect for others, they take turns and show good manners, saying please and thank you. They learn to negotiate and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The older children support the younger children in many ways.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. The key worker system provides parents with a consistent contact on a daily basis. The excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being in the group. Parents' views are sought through discussion, on a regular basis throughout the time their children attend. Effective systems are in place to ensure all parents are kept informed of how their child is progressing in their development and learning. Children benefit from the involvement of parents in projects and topics which contributes to their good health, development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Children's care is enhanced by the efficient management of the setting. The good organisation of the nursery provides a welcoming, environment for children to play and learn. There is a wide range of effective policies and procedures in place to support the management of the nursery. The premises are very well planned in all areas to support and promote children's development and learning. All families are supported and individual children's care needs are followed. The staff ratios ensure children have good support, allowing children to experience the many interesting and different activities throughout the day. The use of time, space and resources enhances children's learning in all areas.

Children benefit from the staff having a sound knowledge of how children learn. Detailed procedures are in place for induction and the ongoing training of staff. They have a commitment to improvement and personal development, this underpins the care and welfare of the children in the setting. The staff show enthusiasm and work as a team to ensure the provision meets the needs of all the children who attend. The nursery has completed a formal development plan, outlining further development of the outside area and names other areas to be improved. This includes staff training for the current developments in the childcare early years sector, for example, continuing training for the Early Years Foundation Stage .

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection there was a recommendation linking to outside safety. The group now has effective systems in place to ensure children's safety.

There were a number of recommendations made relating to the nursery education, these linked to snack time, developing outside play, access to information technology and aims of the day. The group have made many changes to the curriculum planning and now cover all areas of the curriculum.

The recommendations have been completed, improving the safety and nursery education curriculum, better meeting the needs of the children.

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):

- complete the development of the outside environment
- continue to follow the nursery development plan.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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