

# St Thomas More Catholic Nursery School, Before & After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	260900
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Sykes
<b>Setting Address</b>	Park Lane, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 569 708
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Thomas More Catholic Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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 More Catholic Nursery opened in 2001. It operates from a large room next to St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Peterborough. The Nursery mainly caters for the local Catholic community but accepts children from all areas of the city.

There are currently 38 children on roll who are all receiving nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently no children on roll with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the nursery will support children as needed. The nursery supports a high number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 9.00 to 12.00 each weekday morning with extended lunchtime provision from 11.30 to 12.30. Afternoon sessions are each weekday from 12.00 to 15.00 and children from the age of three are welcome to attend.

Six full-time and part-time staff work with the children. All the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 or 3 or equivalent and two staff are working towards a Level 4 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The Breakfast Club and After School Club operate with different managers and staffing teams but under the same management committee. The Breakfast Club runs Monday to Friday, term time only, from 07.45 until 08.55 in a separate mobile classroom on the school grounds that it shares with the After School Club. The After School Club runs Monday to Friday 15.15 to 18.00 term time only and children from the age of three are welcome to attend. Three staff work in the After School Club of whom two have a Level 3 qualification. One child has English as an additional language and the setting also supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health in the nursery benefits from staff who are proactive in promoting children's awareness of healthy living. Children learn about hygiene routines as they wash their hands after messy play, using the toilet and before snack time. This helps them to effectively understand the need to practice good routines of personal hygiene.

Healthy eating is promoted within the nursery and all dietary needs are fully discussed with parents. At snack time children are encouraged to drink milk, fruit juice or water. Children enjoy selecting their own choice of fruit and pouring their own drinks from small jugs. However, children eat their snacks straight off the table top which on occasions is not effectively cleaned between uses, exposing them to cross-infection. Furthermore, the systems in place to ensure children receive food and drink during the session are not robustly monitored which means some children may not receive necessary nourishment. Children are able to help themselves to water throughout the session which means they can remain hydrated throughout the session. Snack time is seen as a social occasion for children to talk about their experiences. Adults develop children's understanding of what foods are healthy as they grow their own vegetables and undertake cooking activities such as making vegetable soup. This helps children develop a positive approach to healthy eating.

The session is well organised each day to ensure there is regular opportunity for children's physical development, both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor area is used well throughout the day and is equipped to provide children with a varied range of activities. Children are able to run around, ride bikes and practise their co-ordination skills as they step through old car tyres. They learn to negotiate paths between other equipment and children as they become aware of space. These types of activities help children to develop their physical skills and develop a positive attitude towards exercise. Indoors an area in the nursery is set aside for exercise, where children can use the slide or generally exert their bursts of energy. Children have good opportunities to use small scale equipment safely to develop their finer manipulative skills, for example, threading, jigsaw puzzles and using scissors.

Children in the Breakfast Club and After School Club are cared for in a clean and tidy environment. Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene through appropriate hand washing routines before eating their breakfast or snacks. Staff follow suitable hygiene procedures such as cleaning tables before meal times. Systems are in place to support the well-being of children. The setting has medication and accident records with consents although permission to access emergency treatment or aid is not in line with current requirements. Children's health is promoted as staff have current first aid qualifications and easy access to a first aid kit meaning they can respond to minor injuries.

Children attending the Breakfast Club benefit from a nutritious range of foods. They can choose from staples such as cereals, toast or crumpets or other foods such as pancakes. They are hydrated with either milk, fruit juices or water. Children are, therefore, able to attend school well nourished and alert for the days education. Children in the After School Club are also provided with a good range of snacks and drinks. They choose from a variety such as crackers, cheese, ham and salami or spaghetti on toast. Drinks are always available to ensure children remain hydrated. Children have opportunities to learn about healthy eating through discussion and individual dietary needs are met promoting growth and development.

Children have opportunities to play outdoors on a regular basis in the school playground or playing field where they can participate in sports games, play chase or skipping, or sit and partake in smaller group activities such as sewing. Fresh air and exercise contributes to children's good health and enhances their attitudes to keeping fit.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in the nursery are cared for by adults who ensure that safety is a priority in all areas of children's care. Access to the nursery is closely monitored and all visitors are requested to produce identification before entering the building making sure only adults with a legitimate reason can access the building. Effective risk assessments ensure that toys and equipment are in good condition and safe for children's use. In addition, risk assessments are undertaken prior to any outings to identify any potential hazards and address them, safeguarding children. Adults demonstrate a sound understanding of child protection and their responsibility to report any concerns to the relevant agencies. Procedures are in place where an allegation is made against a member of staff. This means children are well protected from harm.

There is good space within the nursery to enable children to have room to play freely and comfortably with the toys and equipment. The room is made welcoming with children's pictures displayed on boards and throughout the nursery, fostering their emotional security and sense of belonging. There is a good range of resources available and a varied selection is set out each session to allow children to make their own choices. Further resources are stored imaginatively in different learning areas that relate to the six areas of learning so that children can make individual choices of what they wish to do, developing their independence skills.

Children benefit from the clear safety boundaries set by staff which are supported by explanations, for example not running inside in case they fall over and hurt themselves. This enables children to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe and enhance their understanding of why such requests are made.

Children in the Breakfast Club and After School Club are cared for in a welcoming and generally safe environment. Children in the After School Club have their safety promoted as staff have a practical understanding of identifying hazards and take steps to minimise these. They visually check the premises before the children arrive for any issues and monitor safety throughout the session by reminding children about not running to prevent accidents and packing away toys so that other children cannot fall over them. This ensures that children are able to move around safely and independently during the play session. Children independently select toys and activities from a range of play resources and they are supervised by staff who ensure that the resources are appropriate for the ages, interests and developmental stage. The children's welfare is further compromised as the child protection policy is not in line with current procedures and

there are no records kept of existing injuries that children may have. Staff have a generally sound understanding of the procedure to use should they suspect abuse.

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

The provision is good.

Children separate well from their parents and carers as they come into the nursery and are happy, secure and settle quickly into their own routine. They feel a sense of belonging as they put their coats onto their named pegs, self-register and join in as a group to sing the 'hello song' which acknowledges each child, making them feel valued. Their daily experiences at the nursery are enhanced by staff who are caring and participate in their play experiences, supporting and guiding as appropriate. This creates a positive, caring environment where children receive consistent care. Children are confident and their self-esteem is nurtured as they are given praise and encouragement from staff, for example, as they wait for their turn on the slide or put on their own shoes. Relationships between staff and children are positive. Staff extend learning with appropriate questioning in the activities they are assigned to for the session.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how children learn and progress. They use effective methods to maintain children's interest as they take part in activities, sitting with them, asking questions and extending their play. There is a robust system for recording children's progress through regular and detailed observations. This information is then linked to the stepping stones and staff record children's knowledge of the six areas of learning. Key workers have regular meetings to plan for children's next steps, which are clearly identified. Planning of activities ensures aspects within the areas of learning are covered and that it is adapted for the differing abilities of children. All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are respected and receive appropriate emotional support to achieve their goals. They are developing trust in relationships and a positive self-image. Consequently, they are forming good relationships with their peers and adults, leading to their growth in self-assurance and enhancing their sense of belonging.

Children are interested and keen to engage in play and learning, building their esteem and concentration skills. They have a developing sense of their own needs and they move around the environment confidently choosing what they want to play with. They are becoming increasingly sociable as they play cooperatively, take turns and share resources. They play together well as they, for example, negotiate and re-enact everyday life in home corner, and care for each other, for example, as they offer comfort and support to their friends who are upset without adult prompt. They learn to take turns and share resources as they engage in activities such as using the indoor slide or play together with building bricks. Children are enthusiastic to participate in activities such as chipping insects or dinosaurs out of ice blocks, showing excitement when they reveal what they have discovered, developing curiosity and questioning skills.

Children are developing communication skills as they engage in conversation with their friends and staff who actively listen. Children with English as an additional language are further supported as labels around the setting reflect home languages as well as English which also enhances their sense of belonging. The book corner is welcoming and children enjoy looking at books and sharing stories with staff. This develops competence in language and begins to form the early links to literacy. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks,

for example, writing 'letters' at the mark making table and begin to understand that marks make meaning as they 'write' in exercise books.

Children gain an understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Cooking, water and sand activities develop children's sense of size, weight and capacity. Children demonstrate their understanding of numbers as they count to 10 before going down the slide or build elaborate constructions from building blocks and talk about 'taller' and 'shorter', developing mathematical language and concepts.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed through resources and activities that explore cultures and celebrate festivals. Festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali are celebrated in a meaningful way and are relevant to the children's own home background. They begin to comprehend a sense of time as they watch vegetables and flowers they have planted grow or make a large Autumn display, portraying the seasons of the year. A range of resources and open access to computers build their understanding of information technology and children persist at simple programmes on the computer developing their concentration skills. Resources such as beads and cotton reels for threading, scissors and pens enable children to hone their manipulative skills. Fine manipulative skills are encouraged as well through painting, colouring and using pencils which children use with confidence and in a mature way. There is a varied range of media provided to help children develop an awareness of textures, for example mash potato for them to manipulate and make marks in, colours and shapes. Children enjoy activities such as making snowmen models which they later paint creatively by mixing colours. Children experiment and talk about how red, blue and pink make purple, and this encourages problem solving and creative thinking. Children's imagination is further developed as they create their own games and represent different situations during role play, such as re-enacting everyday life in home corner or as contemporary characters such as 'Spiderman' or 'Thomas the Tank engine'. This imaginative play encourages thought processes and problem solving as they make sense of the world in which they belong. They enjoy dancing and playing musical instruments, for example, they clap in rhythm to the 'hello song' or use instruments and dance around the room keeping to the rhythm of songs being played on the compact disc player. This rhythm and rhyme in their music and singing will underpin later reading and writing skills.

Children in the Breakfast Club enjoy their time there. They independently choose from a variety of resources to keep them engaged and have their breakfast when they are ready to eat, meeting their own individual needs. Staff demonstrate a very caring disposition to the children, ensuring their holistic needs are met. Children participate in circle time before school where they can discuss any concerns they have and say a prayer before commencing the school day. This all contributes a feeling of well-being for each child.

Children in the After School Club are happily occupied and are able to fully participate in the opportunities offered. Staff ensure that these are adapted to an appropriate level and provide sufficient support. Staff respond to children's immediate interests offering resources and activities that children choose to do, giving children a sense of self value and belonging as they lead the session. Children's independence is developing as they make choices about resources and their play. They enjoy a stimulating range of activities that cover all areas of development, encouraging them to explore and learn about their environment. The children are aided in their learning by the skill of the staff who encourage their understanding through informal planning and dialogue using effective questioning and verbal encouragement. They mix paints to decorate their junk models which they make as a small group, helping each other without prompt, fostering their social and empathetic skills. The staff also devise topics and themes for children

to participate in, such as celebrating the cultures of France where they explored maps, tasted French foods and looked at famous landmarks of the country, enhancing their awareness of the wider world. The group hold a circle time daily where children's achievements are talked about and celebrated, enhancing their feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem. Children relate positively to the staff and each other and respond well to the staff's interaction. Children express themselves how much they enjoy attending the Club.

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

The provision is good.

Children entering the nursery are warmly welcomed and feel a sense of belonging as they take part in the routines of the setting, such as sitting together at the beginning of each session to welcome each other or as their birthdays are celebrated in the group. Staff are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and help from outside agencies is sought to ensure appropriate care and support is offered to the child. The setting has a high proportion of children with English as an additional language and systems are in place to support them and their parents such as multilingual translators or information books in a range of languages. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through topic work, resources and the use of books.

Children behave well in the setting. A wide variety of resources and activities are set out to ensure they are purposefully engaged in play. A consistent approach to behaviour management in the setting means children are clear in what is acceptable or not, for example, ensuring resources are treated with care. Constant praise and a firm ethos of constantly recognising children's achievements, for example, as they manage to prepare their own snack, means children's esteem and confidence flourish.

Children are encouraged to share, play together and respect each other. They are given opportunities to appreciate other cultures and express themselves through a variety of mediums. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is being fostered.

Children benefit from the working partnership between their parents, carers and staff to provide effective care. For example, information regarding children's individual needs, such as allergies or dietary requirements, are collated and recorded. This contributes towards maintaining their well-being and safety. Parents receive information about the setting in the information leaflet and regular news letters as well as open days. This information is translated as needed so all parents can have an understanding of how their children are looked after and remain involved in their child's time in the nursery. Children's records and assessments are always available for parents to view at any time and stored in easy accessible in each child's personal drawer. Parents speak very highly of the service the setting provides and of the staff in the setting. Children see these positive relationships between staff and parents, which supports their sense of emotional security.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. The nursery obtains information from parents at the start of the early years education. They gather evidence of children's starting points with parents during home visits and this informs the planning of activities for when the child starts nursery. However, this continuous input from parents is sometimes sporadic which means parents do not become fully involved in their children's education. Parents do, however, report their children enjoy nursery and they feel they are kept well informed.

Parents are provided with an informative booklet that contains guidance on the six areas of learning, activities and routines. The nursery displays the activities on a notice board for parents to see. A lending library has been introduced by the nursery whereby children choose a book to take home for parents to read with them. Parents are kept well informed about what their children have been doing during the sessions through informal discussions at the end of the session and a good relationship exists between parents and the staff. This assists in helping children feel secure. Further formal meetings twice a year with parents keep them informed of their child's progress. The records of progress contain many photographs which support parents who have English as an additional language to understand their children's learning and achievements in the setting.

Children in the Breakfast Club and After School Club also benefit from an environment which enables them to flourish. Behaviour is good as children respond to staff and each other positively, demonstrating warm and trusting relationships. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs recognised and are supported in the Clubs as staff ensure all children are treated equally. Relationships with parents are informal as staff liaise with them at each session about the children, as they bring them to Breakfast Club or inform them of pertinent aspects of the child's day and their participation in the Club as they collect them. This ensures parents are involved in their children's care and well-being. The multilingual staff also translate to parents in their home language, fostering the good relationships between parents and the Club.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery has all mandatory records in place. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and made available to parents and staff. This underpins the efficient running of the service. Good recruitment procedures and ongoing suitability checks for staff are in place, with new staff undergoing an induction programme which covers health and safety and child protection in the first week of employment. This helps to ensure children's safety and that they are cared for by suitable persons. The manager, working with the staff, undertakes assessments of the nursery's working practices in relation to the National Standards and make any necessary adjustments in order to improve standards. The adult to child ratios are maintained. The organisation of the environment is good and staff are well deployed in order to ensure children receive appropriate levels of support at activities. The staff work well as a team and the session runs smoothly. The required documentation is maintained to a high standard and is presented in a very professional manner. This good practice benefits the care and welfare of children.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. The manager and staff are committed and professional in their approach to providing children with good early years play and learning experiences. They work closely together to ensure the day to day running of the pre-school goes smoothly and provide an environment for children to be happy and flourish. Good staffing ratios are maintained throughout the session ensuring children are well supervised and supported during play activities. The manager has worked with the local authority in the past to develop the quality of nursery education and has a positive attitude in implementing strategies to enhance their practice which benefits the children's care and learning.

Children's play and development in the After School Club is supported by generally effective deployment of staff. The welfare and care of children is suitably promoted through maintaining records such as registers. A range of policies are in place, some of which have been reviewed, however, some of these are not in line with current requirements, for example the child



protection policy or consent for emergency medical advice or treatment, which impacts on the welfare of children. There is no appraisal system in place for the manager or staff to recognise their achievements or training needs to promote professional development. Training undertaken supports children's safety such as first aid, but does not give opportunities to staff to undertake other training to enhance their practice. The manager has recognised issues that need to be addressed in the Club, for example, updating all the policies and procedures, and has put into place an action plan. However, the management committee has not yet addressed or implemented these issues. The manager and staff are committed to building their practice to offer children a safe, fun and caring environment for them to flourish.

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 provider was asked to store perishable items in a cool environment. They were also asked to include a written targets for children who need additional support in the short term planning of activities.

The After School Club was asked to ensure significant incidents are reported to Ofsted at the time they occur and that all incidents should be recorded in the incident book.

The nursery, Breakfast Club and After School Club now store all perishable items in a locked fridge whilst ensuring children's food products are clearly labelled. The nursery's observation and planning system now identifies each individual child's level of learning and identifies the next target for the child to work towards. The After School Club is fully aware of the need to inform Ofsted of significant changes and records all incidents appropriately.

### **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 may 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):

- promote the good health of children through efficient monitoring of snack time to ensure all children receive adequate food and drink and that hygiene procedures prevent cross-contamination (this relates to the nursery provision)
- develop further the child protection statement to ensure it is fully in line with the National Standards for Daycare and Local Safeguarding Children Board and ensure existing injuries are recorded and that staff are confident in the procedures to follow if they have child protection concerns (this relates to the out of school care)
- devise & implement systems for regularly updating policies and procedures and develop an annual review system for staff so that areas for development are highlighted and training needs met (this relates to the out of school care).

### **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):

- continue to develop partnership with parents to ensure there is a constant two-way flow of information, providing knowledge and involvement in their child's nursery education (this relates to the nursery provision).

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)