

# Thames Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	199398
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Bridgette Williams
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Thames Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Thames pre-school has been in operation since 1984. In 2002 they moved to new premises in a mobile unit situated in the playground of St Sampson's Junior School which is in the town of Cricklade near Swindon.

The pre-school caters for 26 children from two years and is open during school term times from 09.00 to 11.30, Monday to Friday, and 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. There is also a rising three session on Tuesday afternoons from 13:00 to 15:00 hours. Parents provide a packed lunch for children who stay for lunch, which is from 11.30 to 12.30 hours. There are currently 55 children on roll with 32 children receiving funding.

Children are cared for in an activity room, which is sectioned into activity areas by furniture. Leading from this room is an entrance hall, office, staff room, toilets and kitchen. Children do not have access to the kitchen. Also leading from the main room are store areas and there is direct access to a garden at the side and front of the building. Occasionally the group use the school hall for physical activities.

A light snack is provided for the children.

The pre-school is operated by a parents committee. There is a pre-school leader managing the setting and six members of staff working with the children who are all qualified in early years. Additionally there is an office administrator and one member of staff who prepares and runs the snack bar for the children.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

There are good procedures in place to minimise cross infection, staff ensure that tables are wiped between activities and before children eat their snacks. Children have a good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. They confidently wash their hands with soap and warm water and talk to their peers about why they need to get rid of germs.

Staff collect all relevant information regarding children's allergies which contributes to the children's continuity of care. Children benefit from the setting operating a snack bar; they each visit the bar during the session, choosing which piece of fruit they like would like to eat and independently pour their own drinks. Staff talk with the children about the importance of nutritious snacks and drinks, such as 'milk is good for our bones, it keeps them strong'. This helps children to develop good eating habits and gain an understanding about what foods are good for them.

Children's minor injuries are dealt with appropriately as a high percentage of staff hold a current first aid certificate; information regarding any accidents is shared with the children's families. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication that ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs.

Children enjoy developing their large muscles both indoors and outdoors. Indoors they benefit from being able to use the local primary's school hall where they happily practice skills such as throwing, catching, rolling and aiming. Children are very proud of themselves when they manage to catch a ball and staff praise their efforts. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently during physical activities. Outdoors the setting have a small enclosed garden where they play on cars and bikes; children benefit from having daily fresh air by using a canopy over the play area in the rain and on hot days. Through well planned activities staff ensure that children experience and enjoy a good range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a bright and warm environment. Staff organise the indoor space effectively, allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Resources are easily accessible for children which promotes the opportunity for the children to be independent learners.

There are good systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. Children and staff practice the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis. This helps children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. Staff carry out regular risk

assessments in each room and outside to minimise hazards, which contributes to the safety of the children.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff ensure that children are protected from people who are not vetted and staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. This supports children's welfare.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive at the pre-school extremely enthusiastic and excited to share their experiences with staff and their friends. They part from their carer with confidence and quickly become truly involved in their chosen activity. Children flourish as they independently choose from a wide range of activities that allow them to explore, investigate and become confident independent learners, such as playing with resources from the information technology area, making marks at the writing table and moving moveable toys through paint and studying the types of trails they leave behind on the paper. Staff are skilful at interacting with children's play to maximise opportunities for learning and capitalizing on opportunities to promote and develop children's spoken language.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Children enjoy playing in an attractive and stimulating environment; displays of children's art work and photographs provide good opportunities for children to share their experiences with their parents. For example, when first entering the pre-school there is a trail of pictures of the children on their 'Wellie Walk' sharing the enjoyment they have when looking for puddles and exploring the frosty grass and bushes. The inside learning environment is used to its full potential, children relish the opportunities to play in the role play corner, sit and look at books in the book corner, dress up in the wide range of fancy dress clothes and be creative using the well resourced craft area. Although the outdoor area is small, staff are extremely creative in how the space is used to ensure that all areas of learning are incorporated in their play outside. For example, specifically designed outdoor wallets covering different areas of learning are hung on the fence for children to independently use while playing outside and a small planting area provides opportunities for children to watch plants grow. Written plans are linked to the six areas of learning and make clear what children are expected to learn from the activities. Staff make regular observations and record achievements on the children's building blocks record sheets which relate to the stepping stones. However, staff do not always fully evaluate their observations effectively in planning the individual child's next step of learning.

Children speak very confidently to their peers and adults. They talk openly during their show and tell session about their possessions they have brought in. Their peers listen carefully and show interest while they all take turns during the activity. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully, they spend time looking at books in the book corner and are captivated by stories being told by an author and staff. Many of the children are able to recall favourite parts of the story and enthusiastically participate in the story being told.

Many children are competent in counting and recognising some numerals from 1 to 10. During registration time the children pass round a teddy bear to count how many children are at pre-school, who is known as 'Norman'. They then use the numerals in his satchel to represent how

many children are at their group for that day. Staff encourage children to look for numerals in their pre-school setting, such as on the back of their chairs or on the weighing scales when cooking, and explore in their local community for numerals on front doors and car registration number plates. Children learn about size, shape and using appropriate maths language through practical worthwhile activities, such as making models out of different shaped recycled boxes.

Children are confident in using information and communication technology. They demonstrate good mouse control when playing games on the computer and they use telephones confidently during role play. They are developing a good awareness of their local environment as they regularly go for walks visiting local amenities and their knowledge is enhanced further through regular visits from the local dentist, firemen, policemen and the vicar. Children have many opportunities to develop their senses, such as painting to music, playing with green spaghetti and watching bubbles fly through the air.

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

The provision is good.

The pre school have golden rules which encourage children to learn important social skills, such as sharing, listening, and being kind to each other, this promotes a positive atmosphere where children enjoy each other's company and play harmoniously alongside each other. Children relate extremely well to staff and their friends, children confidently approach staff for support, indicating good trusting relationships are built. Staff treat children with respect and use lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self esteem. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management, children behave well and know the routine and boundaries when they are at pre-school. To reinforce children's good behaviour and wonderful achievements through out the session the setting operate a reward system with the use of a marble jar. Each day the children put a marble into the jar for something they have done well, such as successfully putting on their coats and working hard at the writing table. When the jar is full each child is rewarded with a gift. By providing praise and encouragement children are developing a good positive self esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have a positive attitude towards diversity. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals, such as Thanksgiving, Diwali and the Chinese New Year. There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures their needs are well planned for and met.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Relationships with parents are friendly and supportive. Parents feel welcome and staff encourage them to become involved with their child's learning and development. There is a good two way flow of information, parents receive a wide range of helpful information, such as newsletters informing parents of forthcoming topics and activities, weekly plans are posted on the door and there is an informative notice board. Parents are provided with termly reports on how their child is progressing, the children's assessment files are sent home and parents are invited to write their own comments on the report. Parents have the opportunity to attend a parents' evening where the Foundation Stage is explained and a workshop is offered where parents experience how their children are learning when involved in different activities. This good partnership contributes considerably to children's wellbeing while at the pre- school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised learning environment where staff are committed to providing stimulating surroundings and offering children support and guidance to help them feel secure and confident in exploring new and exciting opportunities.

Staff deployment is good, contributing to effective supervision of the children. There are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences to ensure children have appropriate supervision. Written records are in place to support the children's health and safety, policies and procedures are in place and effective, although some contact details are out of date. The staff and their committee work well as a team, both staff and committee members have clear areas of responsibility which are implemented effectively in the running of the pre-school. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. Staff work well as a team, they continually evaluate the childcare and learning experiences they are providing for the children at their setting, this reflects their commitment to improving the quality of care and education at the pre-school. On-going reviews and appraisals ensure that staff receive support they need to teach their children effectively.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting agreed to develop children's free expression through collage and design and construction opportunities, enabling children to select their own resources and use their own ideas, ensure that all committee members are CRB cleared and that parents acknowledge medication administered to their children.

Since the last inspection a system has been put into place to notify Ofsted of all changes to the committee in order that suitability checks are carried out. The setting have developed a craft area that is well resourced and accessible to children for them to create their own individual art work. The setting have introduced a recording procedure for parents to sign on each occasion a child is administered medication.

## **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.

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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):

- ensure policies contain up to date information

### **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):

- ensure that observations are regularly evaluated and demonstrate how this information is used to inform each child's next step of 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)