

St Thomas Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	145822
Inspection date	04 March 2008
Inspector	Charlotte Jenkin

Setting Address	St. Thomas Church Hall, York Buildings, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8PT
Telephone number	07989 302662
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Registered person	St Thomas Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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's Pre-school is a long established committee run group held in the church hall of St Thomas's Church in the centre of Trowbridge. The group has been open for 35 years. It meets on all mornings except Mondays from 09:15 to 11:45, Friday afternoons 12:15 to 14:45 and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 12:45 to 14:45.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for 26 children aged two to five years and there are currently 43 children on roll. The group accepts funding for three and four-year-olds and there are currently 31 funded three and four-year-olds on roll. They support children with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language.

There are four staff working in the group, three of whom have Early Years qualifications.

The group has use of a large main hall and a grassed area outside the hall for supervised outdoor play.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in clean premises where good standards of hygiene are maintained. Staff promote the good health of the children through implementing hygienic routines throughout the sessions and through encouraging children to learn about the importance of hand washing. Hence, the spread of infection is minimised. Children's health is well protected by staff who have an up to date knowledge of first aid and are aware of the correct administrative procedures to follow if children have an accident or require medication whilst in their care. Staff have received specialist training to support children with specific medical needs within the provision. The sickness policy is formally shared with parents and reminders regarding exclusion periods for contagious illnesses are sent out in newsletters. Hence, children's exposure to unnecessary illness is minimised.

Children develop their awareness of healthy eating through the nutritious snacks they enjoy whilst in the setting. The pre-school offers a lunch club once a week and parents receive information regarding suitable lunch box items, as well as safe storage of foods. Staff gain information from parents regarding children's dietary needs and allergies and any requirements are catered for. Staff are vigilant in ensuring children do not have access to foods they are allergic to and offer alternatives to protect the children's health. Water is available in the room, although this is stored at high level and children are not able to help themselves to this. Hence, they may not have enough fluids throughout the session.

Children have access to daily fresh air and exercise. They are able to play with a variety of equipment, engage in physical activity and games. Children enter the group and display a positive attitude towards physical exercise, asking staff 'Are we going outside today?'. They are keen to line up and go out to play and show a good awareness of space, themselves and others as they run around outside. Children confidently move in various ways and are able to change direction and stop. They develop skills in jumping and balancing and happily join in with action songs. However, the outdoor area is not fully utilised to offer children a full programme for physical development, nor in offering children opportunities in other curriculum areas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in welcoming premises where space has been well organised to meet the needs of the children. Clear learning areas are set up daily by staff, who create areas for children to engage in messy play, role play, creative activities, quiet activities and there is plenty of space for free play. Hence, children are able to access the activities they wish to participate in. However, the organisation of toys and resources, limits children's ability to become independent in accessing those they wish to play with.

Children play in safe premises, free from risks as staff check the premises daily for potential hazards and minimise these to promote safety and prevent accidents within the provision. For example, sockets are covered, heaters are covered, cleaning materials are out of reach and the kitchen is inaccessible to the children. Hence, children move around the premises freely and play in safety. All fire precautions are in place and the evacuation plan is practised with the children and monitored for its effectiveness. Children learn how to keep themselves safe in the

setting, with staff reminding them of the rules which children adhere to. Children also remind peers of the rules in the group to keep themselves and others safe. For example, children say to others 'We mustn't run indoors'.

Children's welfare is safeguarded in the pre-school as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the procedures to follow in the event of concerns. The pre-school shares its child protection duties with parents, records and discusses concerns and this actively promotes the children's well being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the group with confidence and separate from their carers with ease. They are familiar with the routines of the group, knowing to put their book bags on the table and sit on the carpet for registration. Hence, they demonstrate a sense of belonging in the pre-school. Children form good relationships with staff and peers, sitting together on the carpet happily chatting about their personal lives and sharing their news. Children confidently speak in a familiar group and are proud of their achievements, being keen to share these with others. For example, when remembering sign language children are keen to show the signs to staff and peers alike. Children are keen to engage in the available activities and readily access those they wish to participate in. For example, sticking, digging soil and imaginative play in the home corner. Children develop good self-help skills, going to the toilet independently, washing their hands and pouring their drinks at snack time. Children's skills in selecting and using activities and resources and in initiating their own play are not fully developed due to limited availability of toys for free selection.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan a good balance of structured and child initiated activities. They encourage the children's interests through interaction and through asking children questions to promote their thinking and problem solving skills. However, daily routines are not utilised fully to promote children's understanding of counting, number and in solving simple problems. Planning is well organised and focus activities have clear learning intentions for children, and are tailored to children's individual developmental abilities. Hence, children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Staff have a good knowledge of children's abilities and currently record their achievements using the Building Blocks Assessment System. These entries are well supported with observations of children at play that detail what they know, understand and can do, as well as examples of children's work. Therefore, a true record of children's progress during their time in the pre-school is maintained. Staff meet to discuss planning and incorporate children's individual areas for development into planning, hence, they support them to move on to the next stage in their learning.

Children confidently access the well resourced craft area and select materials to use to represent their own ideas through drawing and collage. They happily talk to staff about what they are making, for example, 'I am making a cloud' and explain to younger children 'You need to write your name on before you start'. Children show interest in materials, asking questions and persevering to gain the skills to use tools to cut them. Children engage in role play based on first hand experiences. They use the resources to lay the table, cook food for their peers and then get some paper and pencils to write down orders, making marks for real purposes. Children

then ask for payment for the food, and hold out a pretend cash machine, asking peers to 'Punch in your number'. Children sing during their play, counting the plates as they pretend to wash them up. Children explore construction materials and build and construct with confidence. They are keen to talk about their models and share how they work with others. For example, 'Look at my fire engine, this is the ladder and it has two bells on it'. Children readily explore natural materials, including soil and clay and when planting flowers talk about what is needed to help them grow. They show an interest in books, looking at the pictures, talking about the story and asking adults to read to them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have a good knowledge of children's individuality, value and respect them and meet their needs well. Hence, they promote the children's self-esteem in the pre-school. Children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment that promote positive images of diversity in their play. Children with learning disabilities have their development fully supported in the group in line with advice from parents and outside agencies working with them.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children engage in activities that help them learn about and develop respect for the lives of others, including food tasting, dressing up and craft activities. Children are respectful to their peers and share and take turns in their play.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff are excellent role models to them and are polite and respectful to them. They are consistent in managing children's behaviour using sensitive methods including the use of praise and encouragement. Children talk about the rules of the group and how negative behaviour affects other people. Children, therefore, learn about the rules and confidently re-enforce these with their peers.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good information regarding the group's policies, as well as the curriculum implemented. They are kept up to date with the current theme for learning and the activities their children participate in. Parents have regular feedback regarding their child's progress, both through viewing their assessment records and having discussions with their child's key worker. Parents are invited to contribute to these assessments, commenting on their child's progress and their achievements outside of the group. Parents are involved in their child's learning through a successful parent rota, which enables them to view their child's play and learning in progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

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

Children are cared for by well qualified, suitable and a well established staff team. Recruitment procedures are effective in ensuring adults are suitable to work with children and induction procedures enable staff to become aware of their responsibilities in the group. An accurate record of children's attendance is maintained and staff adhere to the correct adult to child ratios at all times. Hence, children receive plenty of adult support as staff spend time interacting and playing with the children, supporting their development well through play. Children are, therefore, at ease in the busy learning environment where they are well engaged in their play.

Staff implement the pre-school's policies and procedures consistently and this promotes the children's welfare, care and learning. All required documentation is stored securely and is readily available for inspection. All required consents have been gained from parents regarding children participating in the activities and routines of the group. This protects the children's well-being and ensures they are cared for in line with parents' wishes.

Leadership and management is good. The well established staff team work well together and share all responsibilities of the group, including planning. They are well supported by the committee who enable them to access very good training and development opportunities. Staff are committed to improving the educational provision through attending regular training. They implement new ideas gained from this into the group and this continues to improve curriculum delivery. For example, improvements for communication, language and literacy.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to ensure staff promote suitable hygiene practices with the children and to ensure there is a clear procedure in place for taking children on outings. With regard to Nursery Education the group agreed to monitor long term plans to ensure equal attention is given to all six areas of learning and to

ensure the organisation of the learning environment develops children's independence in selecting and using activities and resources, so they can initiate their own play and learning, especially in creative development so children can freely express themselves and their own ideas, using materials of their own choice.

Staff encourage suitable hygiene practices with the children and children independently wash their hands prior to eating and after messy play. There is now a clear procedure in place for taking children on outings and this includes details to promote the children's safety when out.

Long term plans are monitored and equal attention is given to all six areas of learning, although there is scope for improvement within the programme for physical development. Children have some opportunities to choose the activities they wish to participate in and have free access to a well resourced craft area. However, children do not fully develop independence in selecting toys and in initiating their own play and learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection no complaints have been 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 children are able to freely access water throughout the session
- ensure the organisation of toys and resources encourages children's independence in accessing those they wish to play with

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):

- develop the outdoor area to improve the programme for physical education and to ensure children receive opportunities in other curriculum areas
- use daily routines to encourage children's understanding of counting, number and in solving simple problems

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