

# St Thomas's Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135398
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Julia Louise Crowley

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<b>Registered person</b>	Stella Roberts
<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?

St Thomas's Nursery School is run by a private individual. It opened in 1992 and operates from St Thomas's Church hall complex in Oakwood in the London Borough of Enfield. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 09:15 to 15.00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 09.15 to 13:00 on Wednesday, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports one child with special educational needs, and also supports 17 children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff, of these four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications, and two staff are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay effectively healthy because practitioners follow current and up to date environmental health and hygiene guidelines; for example, the setting is hygienically maintained by daily cleaners that ensure the premises is thoroughly ready to receive children prior to their arrival. In addition a thorough risk assessment is completed on a daily basis. The provider has all necessary policies and procedures in place; for example, practitioners have relevant first aid training and implement procedures such as the recording of accidents and administration of medication. This maintains good health and consistency of care. Children's individual health and dietary needs are appropriately recorded and practitioners ensure that guidance and parents' wishes are followed carefully.

Children have a thorough understanding of simple good health and hygiene practices such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating and using tissues appropriately. Practitioners successfully explain why it is important to wash germs away and children have a good understanding of the possible consequences. Children's understanding is further increased through the use of posters, visual aids and discussion at circle time.

Children are well nourished because practitioners provide healthy and interesting snacks at snack time; for example, children independently choose their cups and are offered a choice of milk or water. Children pour from a jug and fill their own cups with the support and encouragement of practitioners. They enjoy a selection of fruits which they know are good for them. However snack time fruit is presented to the children on large plates and bowls that are placed on a tray on the floor and children reach down to choose two pieces. This does not best promote health. Mealtimes consist of packed lunches, practitioners chatter with the children about favourite foods and what is healthy. Parents do not receive guidelines on healthy options and suggestions for the content of the packed lunches consequently this does not promote healthy eating effectively and compromises children's health.

Opportunities for children to be active, learn to control their bodies and develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors are good, for example, children enjoy playing on bikes, large mobile toys, trampoline and parachute. Children competently use a wide range of small tools and equipment with increasing control including, scissors, gluing, sewing, weaving and threading.

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

The provision is good.

Children move confidently around the bright, welcoming learning environment making choices about their play. Space is well organised and used effectively to allow children opportunities to engage in a varied range of activities. Parents have their own notice board and are kept informed by the approachable and friendly practitioners, for example, practitioners discuss daily with parents any information or events that may have happened during the day.

Children use suitable and safe equipment that is child height and meets safety standards. Practitioners are thorough when completing a daily risk assessment, consequently children can independently make choices safely. However actions taken to rectify any hazards are not currently included in the recording of the risk assessment. Children are beginning to keep themselves safe by listening to simple instructions and ground rules, for example, during circle

time children are encouraged to sit so that everyone can see. They show awareness of space, of themselves and others, consequently children learn an ability to concentrate and complete simple safety tasks.

Practitioners show good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues which helps them protect children from harm and neglect. They are clear about appropriate procedures to follow if they have concerns regarding a child's welfare. Children are cared for by practitioners who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills, for example, practitioners working in the small room have completed training focussing on children aged from birth to three and have relevant experience. Security is a effective, practitioners supervise the door when children arrive and depart, this is then locked to prevent them leaving the premises unsupervised. However security is compromised by inconsistent use of the visitors book to ensure the correct data for emergency procedures.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle extremely well at the nursery because practitioners take time to gather information from parents in order to meet the children's individual needs, for example, children's likes and dislikes are excellently catered for and favourite activities and toys provided. They enter very confidently and make themselves at home, moving from table to table. Children relate extremely well and socialise with each other because practitioners encourage social skills, such as sharing and listening to one another, during circle time and snack time.

Children become independent as they choose between a variety of toys, books and activities, which appeal to all, for example, children enthusiastically choose to play with the computer keyboards and make marks with the paper and pencils provided. They telephone friends and make marks on the message pad beside them. Practitioners use the Birth to three matters framework to adapt activities such as singing, story telling and mark making to promote younger children's learning; for example, younger children know, enjoy and join in with a range of familiar songs with actions, claps, gestures and words. Children listen spellbound to the practitioner as she expertly reads the 'Jungle Animals'. Children enthusiastically join in with the sounds and know when the page must be turned. Props are expertly used and children each have a fabric animal depicting the characters in the jungle. Younger children are well behaved and completely focussed as the practitioner successfully sounds out the letters of the words.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Practitioners understand children's needs and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to move them on. Practitioners use suitable teaching methods to support and promote their learning experiences. Practitioners get to know children effectively as they are responsible for monitoring the development and progress of a group of key children.

The activities and experiences are broad and effective and meet the needs of individual children. They use children's assessments to inform future planning, and ensure that their interests are catered for, for example, during the nativity play rehearsal, children express an interest in the piano. Time is taken to gather the children around and the pianist plays a selection of tunes and rhymes. Children delight in the contrasting sounds and use descriptive language to describe the sounds and feeling of the music. They are focussed and inspired as they each press a key and produce a sound.

Children are given a good range of opportunities to make choices and develop independence. They are able to choose from an extensive range of activities and resources throughout the session, wash their hands after painting and messy play and help to tidy up. Children enjoy looking at books both with adults and on their own. They participate enthusiastically in song and story sessions. Practitioner allow children to tell the story and sometimes re place characters with members of staff. Children giggle and enjoy the creative approach that the practitioners introduce. Many children are learning to form letters and older children can accurately write their own names on their art work. Older children are developing early reading skills through clear labelling and displays in the room.

Children are provided with activities that help them to count and calculate, such as cooking activities, rhymes 'ten in the bed' and creative displays. Children all contribute to the nativity frieze and count out the stars, shepherds and animals. Children show skills in counting to 20 and more able children are supported to count up to 50. Children's sense of time and place is promoted through growing seeds for example, broad beans, cress and crocuses. They understand size, shape, and measure through opportunities to cook, act out stories such as the three bears with props and by identifying the size, colour and shape of symbols on the back of each of the nursery chairs. Children use their imagination and creativity in a number of ways, for example, children make the home corner into a fire station with uniforms, telephones and bell. Children regularly play with computer keyboards, phones, a cassette player, torches and magnifying glasses. All of which helps them to know about the use of everyday technology.

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

The provision is good.

Practitioners enjoy effective working relationships with parents. Initially all relevant information prior to children's admission is gathered, enabling the practitioner to cater for the child's needs effectively. Children are valued and respected as individuals and their different backgrounds are recognised and acknowledged by staff. They have access to a range of resources such as dressing up clothes, dolls, books, puzzles and play cooking utensils and foods. Children enthusiastically learn new skills when they prepare and cook foods to celebrate other festivals during the year. Children make sweet Latkes for Hanukkah and coconut cooking to celebrate Diwali. All of which, provides children with a positive outlook of the wider world.

Children benefit from working and playing together as they are learning to effectively communicate with each other and develop positive relationships. Older children work cooperatively in group situations such as the name game and song time. Younger children are given good support to help them learn social skills such as taking turns and sharing and helping one another. Practitioners are consistent in managing children's behaviour, they treat them with respect and are attentive to their requests and questions, consequently the children are confident and secure. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Practitioners welcome parents into the setting and make themselves available to share and exchange information at the beginning and end of the session. An informative handbook is currently being up dated and given to parents prior to their child's admission. However information regarding what to do should a parents have a complaints is not communicated effectively. Clear systems for communicating children's individual progress are not established consequently parents are not always sufficiently informed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Management successfully encourage practitioners to undertake training and consequently this helps to support children and promote their development and learning.

Management continues to evaluate practice and increase resources creating a welcoming and stimulating environment for children to work and play. However organisation of team meeting and one to one meetings with the Manager is less thorough. Planning is good, showing that children are offered worthwhile opportunities and varied activities and written assessments are informative.

Children benefit from a motivated team of staff who are very attentive and keen to enable children to enjoy their time at the nursery and to learn.

There is an effective recruitment procedure in place. This means that suitable and experienced persons look after children. The key worker system ensures that appropriate care and supervision is given to all children. Children's health and safety is consistently promoted. The setting 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 develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. This has been achieved as all practitioners have completed training in 'Safeguarding Children'. Practitioners show good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues which helps them protect children from harm and neglect. They are clear about appropriate procedures to follow if they have concerns regarding a child's welfare. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and easily accessible.

## **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.

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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):

- provide information to all parents that offer options and suggestions for a nutritional balanced packed lunch in order to promote health within the nursery
- include actions taken to rectify any hazards highlighted in the safety risk assessment
- arrange fruit time so that health and hygiene is best promoted in the serving and presentation of foods

### **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 parents receive good quality information about the provision, the educational programme and are well informed about children's progress and achievements
- provide clear systems for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and staff development

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