

# St Thomas More Montessori Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY372721  
**Inspection date** 19/11/2008  
**Inspector** Suzanne Joyce Stedman

**Setting address** St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School, South Road,  
SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex, CB11 3DW  
**Telephone number** 01371 831902  
**Email** westwoodmont@btinternet.com  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## **Description of the setting**

St. Thomas More Montessori Pre School is one of three nurseries run by a private owner. This group registered in 2008. It operates from a Portakabin in the grounds of a school, which is accessed via a slope and there is also a disabled toilet. It is situated in the town of Saffron Walden, Essex. A maximum of 20 children aged two to five years may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 29 on roll including 14 funded children. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 until 15.00, term-times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs three full-time and three part-time staff. There are four members of the staff, including the manager who hold an appropriate early years qualification. This group is registered on the Early Years Register as well as the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

The pre school provides extremely effectively for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enjoy excellent access to an extensive variety of resources and activities, which enable them to engage as active learners. Staff encourage children to develop appropriate skills via their extensive assessments and planning, with a clear focus. The group's records relating to the welfare of children are extensive and exceptionally well-maintained. The manager is aware of the strengths of the provision and has noted some areas for future development.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- develop the use of the outside areas to incorporate all areas of learning.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

There are very efficient procedures in place relating to the induction and deployment of staff. All staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding issues and all members of staff are vetted. The group's written policies and procedures are well written and fully implemented by staff and provide clear information for parents. Since registration, the manager has worked on developing the provision so as to meet individual children's needs fully. She has begun to use self-evaluation as a tool to highlight areas for further improvement and has several ideas for developing the environment indoors and outdoors. However, not all areas of learning are currently covered in the outside area.

The partnership with parents and carers is a strength of the setting. The manager

liaises closely with parents, starting from their first enquiries then through an initial induction to settling children into the group. Information about the provision is attractively displayed and includes details of the planned activities. Staff feedback to parents daily. There is an excellent emphasis on inclusion within the group. This is further encouraged by the manager working together with parents and other providers, to cater for children with any special needs. Her quality of leadership contributes to the smooth day-to-day running of the group.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

The group provides a very bright, stimulating and interesting environment for children of all ages. In a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere, children develop a sense of belonging and become confident learners. They enjoy large group times which offer an opportunity for listening to stories and singing songs. Their behaviour is good and their self-esteem is boosted when praised for achieving such as when identifying different countries and the animals that live there. An excellent range of resources is set out so that children can choose independently and in this way, follow up their own interests. Staff offer excellent support, enhancing children's play through their involvement and conversation. Children are challenged in their learning through open-ended questions which encourage them to think. They especially enjoy cooking activities. They participate in conversation about following the recipe and instructions while helping with weighing the ingredients and mixing.

Staff plan a variety of activities around themes, taking into account the six learning areas. This enables children to focus on a particular aspect in organised activities. In freely chosen activities, children explore mark-making, puzzles and computer games. They find out about the natural world when taken for walks in the school grounds. These learning experiences are particularly beneficial in allowing children to explore happily in their own time, thereby developing relevant skills. Staff collect evidence to illustrate children's progress in the form of photographs and observational notes which are put directly onto the laptop, highlighting targets for children's future learning, allowing staff to extend children's skills more effectively.

Children's welfare is extremely well promoted by following set procedures which ensure that children keep healthy and safe. Children enjoy nutritious snacks and meals. They have fun joining in food preparation, for instance, discussing different fruits while the snack is prepared. They enjoy daily opportunities for outdoor play, developing their control and coordination as they use wheeled vehicles, a sand tray and the school adventure area. Rigorous risk assessments of the premises and activities are carried out regularly by staff and recorded. Children learn to follow instructions and make a positive contribution to the group, for example, they decided they were going on a bus journey and made their own tickets. They are aware of their boundaries within the setting and develop close relationships with others. Children are always well supervised and feel valued as individuals.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.