



St Thomas Aquinas After School Project

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 141788

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Inspector Dorcas Elizabeth Forgan

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Registered person St Thomas Aquinas After School Project

Type of inspection Childcare

Type of 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Thomas Aquinas School Project opened in 1995. It operates from two halls in St. Thomas Aquinas School, in Bletchley Milton Keynes. The project is managed by a committee of volunteers and serves children from the school. A maximum of 60 children may attend the project at any one time. The Project is open five days a week, during term times, from 15:00 until 18:00 and from 08:00 until 18:00 during school holidays. All children share access to the school playground.

There are currently 85 children aged from 3 years to under 8 years on roll.

The project employs eight staff. Of the staff three, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. They stay healthy because practitioners follow current environmental health and hygiene guidance, policies and procedures very well. Children are encouraged to practice careful hygiene procedures, such as washing their hands after art and craft activities. They are learning how their body works and to take personal responsibility for their own bodies through interesting themes, activities and discussions. The staff follow good procedures when administering medication and first aid to ensure the children's welfare and comfort.

Children benefit from a healthy, well balanced diet. Tea is often prepared on site using fresh ingredients. Staff pay attention to children's individual requirements and their likes and dislikes. Children are able to request specific items to be included on the menu. During the holiday scheme parents supply the lunch boxes. Meal times are social occasions when children can sit with their friends and be relaxed. Good table manners are encouraged. Children can independently access drinking water as they wish, throughout the sessions.

Children enthusiastically take an active part in a wide range of physical activities that are available to them, both inside and outside. They have daily use of the school playground where they can ride scooters, play football, hopscotch or sit and talk in the train. The large hall is used for games and activities that require plenty of space, such as team games, dancing and large construction. Staff provide opportunities for children to sit quietly and rest when necessary. Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health and build their confidence as they practice skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Thorough procedures ensure children's safety in an extremely well organised, attractive environment. Staff carry out comprehensive risk assessments of the building and equipment, especially when they introduce new items. Security of the premises is effective in a very difficult situation where others need access. This is accomplished through careful monitoring and supervision.

Children move around safely and independently. They select from a comprehensive range of resources that the staff present imaginatively to stimulate the children and ensure that they are gainfully occupied. Staff provide children with excellent, purposeful activities to make them aware of dangers and how to keep themselves

safe. For example, discussions and activities looking at the theme of bullying, at the end of which children produced excellent anti-bullying posters. They have also taken part in discussions with the police about talking with strangers. Children are well protected by the staff who have a secure knowledge of child protection policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the group enthusiastically. They are keen to see what activities are on offer and to meet up with friends. They are gaining confidence and self-esteem through being part of a very positive, friendly environment. Children know that they are able to influence the way the provision operates and the activities that are on offer. They do this through their own committee and evaluations that they make of the group. It is a truly inclusive group. Staff are good role models. They respect the children and value their opinions. Children have developed very good relationships with the staff who are amiable and supportive. All of the children choose which activity they would like to take part in and are gaining independence. Many initiate their own games and activities, such as singing and dressing up.

Children benefit from the staff planning interesting and exciting activities that keep them motivated. Such as learning about different body parts and building a volcano. However, there are very few opportunities for children to experience visits or outings away from the school premises. Staff are sensitive to the needs of children. They provide them with the space to do homework quietly and the opportunity to do research if necessary. They also provide energetic physical play if that is what the children need. Children express themselves through art and craft activities and imaginary play. They learn new skills and have the opportunity to practice old ones. They are gaining confidence whilst having fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to respect one another's views and are introduced to different cultures beliefs and traditions, such as when they celebrated Mardi Gras and Chinese New Year. Children access a wide range of equipment, which promotes positive images of diversity in a wider world. They have also produced their own welcome poster in many different languages. The staff in the after school project have a clear understanding of how to care for children with special needs, although none currently attend.

Children are polite and very well behaved. Staff use very good strategies to help children learn self-discipline and consideration of others. This is through visitors to the group, discussions and group activities. Staff are good role models, they remain calm and patient, promoting self-esteem and confidence.

Partnership with parents is very good. The daily sharing of information, regular

newsletters and displays on the notice board help staff and parents work together to meet individual children's needs. Staff invite parents to share their thoughts about the play scheme through evaluation forms and the comment book. Consequently, children gain further confidence in the setting and their sense of belonging is reinforced.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from their care being well organised. Close links are fostered between the school and the provision. This has a positive impact for the continuity of care for the children. The committee and manager carry out thorough employee selection and vetting processes. Regular staff meetings ensure good communication between everyone. Staff training is given high priority. Children's time at the setting is fulfilling and productive due to the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the person in charge should gain a level 3 qualification, the certificate should be displayed and improvements should be made to the attendance details. The new manager has completed level 3 qualification to enable her to carry out her role competently. The registration certificate is displayed. The project has developed the attendance register to record the children's names and the hours that they attend. Staffs' names are recorded in the daily diary. These steps ensure that correct details are kept of all present on the premises.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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?
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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):

- develop further the opportunities for children to access a wider variety of experiences through outings and visits

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk