



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 309486

DfES Number: 515799

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/01/2004
Inspector Name	Lisa Patterson

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Thomas Pre-School
Setting Address	Marton Street Lancaster Lancashire LA1 1XX

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of St Thomas Pre-School
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	St Thomas Pre-School
Address	Marton Street Lancaster Lancashire LA1 1XX

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

St Thomas Pre School has been offering sessional day care for over 16 years to families of young children in Lancaster and the surrounding communities including Carnforth and Heysham. It is located in a single storey prefabricated building to the rear of St Thomas's church in the centre of Lancaster city and is open from 09:30 till 12:00 hours, Monday to Friday during term time only. There are currently 28 children on register of whom eight are in receipt of government funding. There are no children for whom English is an additional language and no children identified as having special educational needs.

The pre school has access to one large play room sectioned into areas for role play, messy play and large apparatus and a smaller room for quieter activities and floor toys. Toilet facilities are accessed within the large room. There is a kitchen and storage area accessed from the hallway to which the children do not have access. There is no outdoor play area.

The staff team of two is led by a qualified teacher and the other member of staff is working towards a level III qualification in child care. Pre school staff are regularly supported by volunteer support workers and there is a parent rota system in operation, whereby parents assist at sessions and are counted within the ratios of adults. Pre school staff welcome advice and guidance from the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership.

### How good is the Day Care?

The overall quality of day care is good. The staff team work well together led by a manager who is a qualified teacher. There is a commitment to further professional development and staff have attended further training, including one member of staff who is currently working towards a level III qualification in child care. Staff are clear about their roles and informal planning meetings are held to discuss activities and issues. Staff are also invited to attend committee meetings. Documentation is mostly up to date and contains relevant information, though lacks the required detail in part.

Staff show an understanding of safety issues with regard to the physical environment and equipment, though some areas for attention were identified. One member of staff holds a current first aid certificate and both members of staff are due to attend further training in the near future. Snacks and drinks are nutritious which ensures children receive appropriate food and drink.

The nursery is welcoming to parents and children appear settled and secure. Displays of children's work and commercial posters adorn the walls and ceilings creating a bright environment. Children have free access to a range of activities for most of each session which promotes independence and social skills. Staff directed activities run alongside the free play, providing more focussed learning experiences which relate to current themes. Children with specific needs and their families are well supported.

Partnership with parents is good. They are provided with detailed information on first leaving their child and regular newsletters keep them informed of activities and events within the preschool. There is a flexible system in operation for new starters and parents are welcome to stay in the room at the beginning of sessions until their child is settled and secure. Parents have access to all information held about their child and there are regular updates on progress both verbally and in writing.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Both actions highlighted during the last inspection were completed within the required timescales.

An action plan regarding staffing was submitted to Ofsted and there is now a complement of two relevantly qualified staff which ensures the care and education provided to children is appropriate.

The pre school have obtained a copy of the ACPC guidance and updated the policy accordingly. This has, however also been included as a recommendation during this inspection in the light of changes in guidance.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Good use is made of space and resources and children have free access to equipment giving them opportunities to develop independence and social skills.
- A bright environment has been created through displays of children's work and commercial posters.
- Children with specific needs are well supported through the use of additional staff. They are regularly monitored and any information is fed back to parents. Advice from outside agencies is well used where appropriate.
- There are very strong links with parents and there is daily feedback both before and after the sessions. This give staff a better knowledge of the child and this information can be used to inform planning and activities.

- Children are well behaved and staff are consistent in their approach to inappropriate behaviour giving children a sense of security and understanding of what is right and wrong. Positive reinforcement is used throughout the session to encourage the children and this is effective in maintaining a calm atmosphere in which the children can play and learn.
- Careful thought is given to the area of equality of opportunity and children are introduced to different cultures through music, dance, food, festivals and practical activities.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the clearance procedures
- documentation to ensure all policies are in accordance with the National standards
- the practice of carrying out risk assessments
- the temperature of the setting
- hygiene procedures prior to snack times.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

#### **CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

#### **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**

##### **The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown**

Std	Action	Date
1	Ensure all committee members have completed the relevant clearance procedures including the enhanced CRB checks.	26/04/2004

##### **The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
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6	Review and update the risk assessment to ensure hazards are identified and any recommendations made are fully complied with.
4	Assess the temperature of the setting and take any corrective action necessary.
7	Review practices with regard to hand washing prior to snack times.
14	Revise the setting's policies, including child protection, behaviour and ensure they contain all the relevant information as outlined in the National Standards and their guidance documentation.

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

St Thomas Pre school offers generally good quality nursery education. Children are making generally good progress in all six areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. The staff team set clear routines and have high expectations of children's behaviour. Staff plan for children using the six areas of learning, though short term planning lacks detail in certain areas. Good systems are in place to observe and assess children's progress. There is a wide selection of activities on offer to which the children have free access and staff are developing the learning intentions for these areas of continuous provision. Adult directed activities relate to current themes though aspects of their delivery could be further enhanced to increase motivation. Examples of children's work are displayed throughout the setting but they are not regularly used to reinforce learning, or updated, which decreases motivation. There were missed opportunities during activities and the daily routine for developing self care skills, calculation and some aspects of language.

Leadership and management are generally good. There is a commitment to further professional development and staff regularly attend further training to keep abreast of changes to child care practices and policy. The small staff team and committee are clear about their roles and responsibilities. An induction procedure ensures staff have an understanding of the setting within the first few weeks of employment.

Partnership with parents is very good. A brochure informs them of the provision including the philosophy and the curriculum for funded children. There is an open door policy and regular opportunities for verbal and written exchanges of information about children are available. Parents receive regular updates about pre school activities either by newsletter or through the parents notice board. Also displayed is information about the Foundation Stage and photographs of children at the pre school to illustrate.

### What is being done well?

- Relationships between staff and children and children and children are good leading to children who feel settled and confident to develop their skills.
- Children are confident and are beginning to work as part of a group through which they develop their sharing, turn taking and socialisation skills.
- Staff have high but realistic expectations of children's behaviour and are good role models, which ensures boundaries are clear to children.
- The staff team are committed to further professional development and access courses through the EYDCP to ensure their skills and knowledge about early education are current.

- Parents are valued as important members of the pre school family and their views and intentions for their children are implemented by staff when planning for the children. They take an active role through attending nursery as part of the parent rota.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- short term planning to ensure there is sufficient detail to enable practitioners (either staff or volunteers) and children to get the most out of activities. Current planning lacks detail with regard to differentiation for different ages and stages of development, how the activity can be introduced and reinforced to the children and how children's input can be used to enhance the learning opportunities
- displays to ensure motivation levels and momentum for topics are maintained by regularly updating and using them to reinforce learning
- access to ICT equipment on a regular basis
- use of daily routines and activities, the physical environment and free play activities to further enhance skills in mathematics and language.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The pre school has made generally good progress since the last inspection. Four key issues were highlighted during the last inspection as follows:

The pre school was asked to be more specific in planning about the learning objectives for each activity and to use evaluations to inform further planning. Planning sheets now show clear learning intentions though these could relate more clearly to the stepping stones to inform assessment and further planning. Other areas for improvement were also identified during this inspection.

They were also asked to plan more activities to extend writing skills. Opportunities for independent mark making and free writing for a purpose are available at every session, including shopping lists, menus, etc which has motivated the children to write and use writing implements. Children are also encouraged to make marks when carrying out directed activities. Further areas for improvement in this area, however have also been identified during this inspection.

An assessment file was to be developed containing examples of children's work to show progression. Files of examples of work are now available and more recent additions are clearly annotated to show what children can do. This gives staff a clear basis for assessments of children.

The selection of books available to children was to be updated to include information and story books which reflect diversity. There is a wide selection of books available to children which are rotated to maintain interest.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident and able to share and take turns. Standards of behaviour are high and children show respect for each other and equipment. There are good interactions between staff and children and children with each other. Children repeat and persist at activities they enjoy. Children leave their parents confidently and appear settled in the pre school environment. Self care skills could be further developed during snack times in order to promote independence.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children speak confidently in large and small group situations and are able to explain what they are doing. There are opportunities for children to write and make marks and enjoy using mark making materials which are easily accessible. There is a wide selection of reading materials available which is rotated with regard to topics. Opportunities for reading and writing recognisable words from the environment and during activities are limited and can hinder their progress in literacy.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn about number through practical activities and number rhymes and songs. An understanding of measurement and space is developed through baking and free play activities. Most children are able to count to five and some can count beyond this. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to use number and calculation skills as part of the daily routine and to recognise number in familiar contexts, hence hindering levels of progress in the area of numeracy.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore features of living things regularly and relate to their own health and well being. They are given opportunities to discover differences between their own cultures and that of other parts of the world through music, dance, food and festivals. Children learn about where they live and the features of the area. There is limited access to ICT equipment on a regular basis. Some directed activities limit children's input into selecting their own resources and using designing skills.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move with control and coordination throughout the setting and use equipment confidently. They show an awareness of the space of themselves and others in the setting. Climbing and balancing skills are developed during most sessions and children use the climbing frame with confidence. The use of the large apparatus and other planned activities do not sufficiently extend the development of movement. Health issues are discussed through topic about food and healthy living.



CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children have opportunities to explore colour, texture, and shape through free play and directed activities. Music plays a large part in pre school and children enjoy listening and dancing to a wide range of different music ranging from different countries and historical periods. Role play is on offer at every session through which children are able to develop their imagination. Children have access to a range of materials and tools including musical instruments, play dough, junk modelling etc.	

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**

## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- Review the short term planning to ensure it contains sufficient information for the children to get the most out of the activities.
- Update and use displays regularly to reinforce learning and maintain motivation levels.
- Provide access to ICT equipment on a regular basis.
- Make better use of daily activities and routines, the physical environment and free play activities to further develop skills in mathematics and language.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*