



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 251662

DfES Number:

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	08/10/2003
Inspector Name	Nicola Mary Eileen Matthews

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Thomas Playgroup
Setting Address	St Thomas Church Hall Bramford Lane (North West) Ipswich Suffolk IP1 5EP

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of St Thomas Playgroup 1026912
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	St Thomas Playgroup
Address	St Thomas Church Hall Bamford Lane (North West) Ipswich Suffolk IP1 5EP

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 Playgroup meet in a church hall in the town of Ipswich. The playgroup have been established for over 25 years. There is no access to an outside play area.

The group are registered for 24 children aged 2-5 years old. Sessions are held every morning between 9.15 am and 11.45 am. Term time only.

There are seven members of staff that work at different sessions. There is a high staff ratio. The supervisor is attending Early Years training, others are on waiting list to start.

All children are accepted in to the provision and the playgroup are in receipt of funding for 3 and 4 year olds.

The playgroup receives support from the liaison teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

St. Thomas Playgroup offers acceptable provision for the children but has significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by the quality of teaching and significant weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development. Progress in children's personal, social and emotional and physical development is generally good.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses with some generally good aspects. The staff are motivated and enthusiastic to improve the provision and are attending training to enable them to do this but they have not been able to access the Foundation Stage courses. Staff encourage children's developing independence in their choice of activities. They use books to support the children's developing early reading skills, pay good attention to children's physical development, but do not always provide a wide range of resources regularly to enable children to extend their play.

Some planning and assessment is in place, however the plans are not linked to the early learning goals. The assessments of children's learning are not sufficiently evaluated using the stepping-stones, which results in children's next step in learning not being identified. Assessments are not shared with the parents, they are not able to contribute to and be part of the planning for their child's progress.

The leadership and management of the playgroup has significant weaknesses. However, the manager is aware of issues that need improving and is gradually putting new ideas in place to enhance the quality of the children's learning. The staff are developing as a team. Individual's strengths are used when delegating roles and responsibilities, however, the deployment of staff does not always meet the children's needs.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are encouraged to become involved but they are not fully informed about the foundation stage curriculum.

### What is being done well?

- Relationships between staff, children and their parents is good, which ensures children feel confident to be parted from their main carer.
- Children's gross motor skills, hand to eye coordination and awareness of space are promoted effectively through access to large and small equipment.
- Children are developing independence. They are learning to understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour within the setting through the sensitive intervention of the staff.
- Children are developing confidence in using language, to communicate their

needs and in their play. They participate in simple conversations with other children and adults. They enjoy listening to favourite stories and participating in acting out traditional tales and rhymes.

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

- staff's knowledge and implementation of the Foundation Stage and how to link the stepping-stones with the planning and assessment systems to ensure all areas of learning are covered;
- staff's use of the assessment system so that they can plan for the child's progression;
- staff deployment and the use of resources to ensure that the needs of all children are met and they are able to consolidate and progress in their learning;
- opportunities for parents to participate in contributing to the assessments and planning for their child's next step;
- information for parents on the Foundation Stage.

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

The nursery has made limited progress since the last inspection. Children are being given more opportunities to explore and investigate using their senses. However, they do not record their observations made in this area of learning.

Children are not given regular opportunities to consolidate and make progress in linking sounds with letters.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's independence and motivation to play is promoted by the calm, friendly and enthusiastic attitude of the staff. At some of the activities, children are developing high levels of concentration. Through themed play children are beginning to start to learn about caring for and being sensitive to others needs. Children's behaviour is mostly good, however, children have limited meaningful activities to access, while staff are busy tidying up, this results in some disruptive behaviour.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are gaining confidence in using language for a variety of purposes. They handle books appropriately and enjoy participating in and acting out stories. Children who have English as an additional language are supported by use of their first language for counting and naming work. Children are not given sufficient opportunities to recognise and begin to write their names, ascribe meanings to marks, use marks for recording and communicating and recognising letter sounds.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Many children count reliably to five and some beyond, however, they are not given sufficient opportunities during their play to consolidate and progress in recognising and using number. Some mathematical language is used and children are able to recognise shapes. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop simple calculation skills and to hear the language associated with this. Children do not have many opportunities to use length, height and capacity in their play.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing effective observation and investigation skills using their senses, however, they do not make simple records of what they have been doing. Design skills are promoted through craftwork, using a variety of techniques with adult support. Children are beginning to understand about their own and others beliefs and cultures through topic work. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to begin to know how to operate simple equipment.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are given good opportunities to develop large motor skills. The climbing frame provides challenge and staff use movement time to enable the more able child to develop complex skills like skipping. The small equipment and tools available promote children's hand to eye coordination. Children are developing good awareness of space whilst negotiating an appropriate pathway round static equipment. However, they are not able to begin to observe the effects activity has on their bodies.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are given good opportunities to explore sound and rhythm using musical instruments. They enjoy participating in singing simple songs from memory. Children experiment with colours using different painting techniques, however, they are unable to select their own art and craft resources to develop their own ideas of representation as a means of communication. Children are not given sufficient resources to support their imaginative play based on first hand experiences.

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

## OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

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

- improve staff's knowledge, understanding and implementation of the foundation stage curriculum, through training;
- improve and implement knowledge and understanding of how to provide an effective learning environment where teaching strategies enable children to consolidate and progress in their learning;
- develop the assessment system so it is, linked to the stepping stones, used to enable children to progress in their learning and shared with parents who are encouraged to contribute to these;
- develop strategies to deploy staff, use resource and time effectively.

*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.*