

St Thomas Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	309486
Inspection date	24/05/2011
Inspector	Lisa Patterson

Setting address	Marton Street, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1XX
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Telephone number	01524 590412
Email	catiesgiles@yahoo.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

St Thomas Pre-school is operated by a management committee. It has been registered since 1992 and operates from a designated pre-school building behind St Thomas' Church in the heart of Lancaster. Children have access to a main room, entrance room and quiet room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open on Monday and Friday from 9.30am till 1pm and from Tuesday to Thursday from 9.30am till 3.30pm, during term time.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 28 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery supports children for whom English is an additional language.

There are nine members of staff, three of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. The nursery provides funded nursery education places for three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are effectively met because staff have a well developed knowledge of the children. Staff do not always use every opportunity to promote learning. Well established partnerships with parents are fully used to support children. This means that children's welfare and learning is successfully promoted. As a result, children make good progress. Children are safe and secure, though some routines do not minimise infection. The setting is committed to further development and has used the Ofsted self-evaluation form to monitor progress and act upon priorities for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- make more effective use of everyday routine activities for developing independence skills, numeracy and making marks, such as during snack times
- update the assessment of risk regarding the collection of children at lunch times and revise the handwashing routine to promote the good health of children and minimise the risk of cross-infection.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding of the indicators of abuse and the procedure to follow should they have a concern.

Robust recruitment and selection procedures are in place though documentation is sometimes disorganised. A comprehensive written policy document is in place, containing procedures to follow and these are well understood by staff. All required documentation is in place and stored securely where necessary. Risk assessments maintain children's safety and stringent daily checks are also carried out prior to access to the building or garden. Procedures during the collection of children do not always maintain the security of the premises.

The setting is very forward thinking with a clear vision for development. The Ofsted self-evaluation form is well used to identify and prioritise areas for development. All recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed effectively. Staff attend various training events to maintain their knowledge base or bring new ideas to the setting. Good use is made of parents skills in developing the setting, for example, the garden areas.

Children move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment. They enjoy times to be active in the larger room, with quieter activities in the smaller room. Resources, many of which show images of diversity are well maintained, very accessible to the children and labelled with words and pictures. This supports children's developing independence. Walls and ceilings are adorned with examples of children's creations and many displays are interactive, to maintain interest. Staff are well deployed to share in the children's experiences and challenge their thinking.

Partnerships with parents are well established. They receive a wide range of information about the setting and their child on a regular basis. Newsletters containing examples of activities to try at home gives the parents opportunity to be part of pre-school. Their views are valued and comments made are acted upon. Parents say that they are very happy with the pre-school and feel that their children are making good progress. Partnerships with other settings or agencies are not currently in place as there are no children who require additional support. Staff are aware of the need to liaise with other agencies and settings.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They confidently separate from their parents in readiness for the activities. Their imaginations run wild in the indoor and outdoor spaces, pretending to be late for school and taking babies for a walk. They independently access the good selection of resources and move freely around the available play spaces. They are kind to each other and are learning to share and take turns. Their independence is encouraged through giving them opportunities to fasten their own coats. During snack time, however, they are not encouraged to pour their own drinks. Children are reminded to stay safe through gentle reminders from staff about the rules of the setting. Staff help them to take risks but equally to keep themselves safe, for example, by taking turns when jumping off a bench. Children are beginning to show an awareness of maintaining good hygiene. The snuffle station is well used by children with runny noses and they are monitored when washing hands. Hand washing procedures do not always

minimise the risk of contamination. This is because hands are not always washed directly before handling snacks.

Children's development is monitored effectively through the use of observations and identification of their next steps. Their access to and progress in all areas of learning is tracked, ensuring gaps in children's learning are identified. Information is used to plan activities for children, however, staff are not always aware of the individual learning outcomes. This sometimes leads to activities lacking focus.

Children confidently speak to the group and share their ideas. Staff help them to understand that listening is also very important. There is a wide range of language displayed and children are beginning to recognise initial sounds, through, for example, self registration. They love to snuggle up for an interactive story with a member of staff, during which they collectively talk about the pictures and make predictions. Skills in numeracy are developed through routine activities, such as talking about the date and weather during circle time. Other opportunities for developing numeracy and mark making are not fully utilised during the sessions, such as during snack time. Children solve problems as they try to fit two bean bags through a narrow gap and share water between watering cans when they run out. They are beginning to recognise one and two digit numbers in their play.

Children's knowledge about the world is well developed. The learning environment shows positive images of diversity and interactive displays see children flying around the globe. They tend the garden and learn that without care and attention, plants will not survive. They look forward to eating the fruits of their labour and talk excitedly about the strawberry flowers. Children have access to a good selection of technological equipment during the sessions. They talk to one another and staff through their walkie-talkies and use push button toys. The computer is not always switched on. Children are physically active on a daily basis, either inside or outside. They manoeuvre sit-and-ride toys competently and with precision. They enjoy making salt dough and discover how the sticky gooey dough turns hard in the oven. They fully participate in whole group singing sessions, dancing and using musical instruments.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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