

St Thomas Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	218244
Inspection date	19/09/2011
Inspector	Lynne Milligan

Setting address	Wade Centre, The Avenue, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST7 1AG
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Telephone number	01782 788061
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Email	
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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 Nursery opened in 1980 and operates from the Wade Centre in Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. The nursery is open five days a week during school term times. Morning sessions take place every weekday from 8:30am to 11.30am and from 12.30 to 3pm, with a lunch club offered in between. Children attend for a variety of sessions which operate during term time only.

The nursery is registered on the early years register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 61 children aged from two to four years on roll. The setting is also registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager has gained a BA Hons in Early Years and another member of staff has a BA Hons in Education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The committee, management and staff provide an outstanding level of care and education for all the children in the nursery. Each child is recognised for their uniqueness and clearly valued for their contribution. Inclusion is at the forefront of their expertise as staff are skilled, considerate and dedicated. Their commitment to working with parents is exemplary and contributes to the excellent progress children are making. The committee and management work closely and effectively to provide a thoroughly professional and caring environment. Meaningful links within the community strengthen the nursery's ability to outperform and the process of self-reflection secures this high level of delivery. Children's ability to trust the adults who care for them are secure in the hands of the nursery, with their safety demonstrated as being their utmost priority.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continuing to further include children's views, using voice recorders in order to further extend the self-assessment process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery's approach to keeping children safe is strong and comforting. Each and every consideration has been given to the importance of protecting children. Recruitment and induction procedures ensures all staff, volunteers and students

are suitable and trustworthy. Robust background checks, along with newly updated Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and continuing suitability declarations confirm all adults are professional and appropriate. Each member of staff has undergone safeguarding training, with plans to further update existing knowledge built into the nurseries operational plan. Staff have an outstanding knowledge of child protection issues which are underpinned by concise well-written procedures. Areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity and health and safety are high on the agenda at every staff meeting which clearly demonstrate that these areas are a real priority. Written procedures are seen as working documents so are often updated, with feedback used from the staff and parents as to whether they are informative and easily available. The highly qualified and informed health and safety officers consistently oversee all potential risks and this provides a very safe yet enjoyable environment for the children, their families and any visitors. Increased staffing levels allow children to explore with confidence whilst enabling staff to spend some considerable time with individual children, in particular those that are either new to the nursery or who have certain needs. The manager is extremely proactive and encourages her staff to mirror this approach through everyday practice. As a result, the nursery runs smoothly as all eventualities are planned for well in advance. Elements of the nursery's success 'oozes' out of everyone involved and therefore creates an inclusive atmosphere, where each individual is fully valued and respected. Time is taken to listen to the children, their parents and staff, some of which is recorded in a self-reflective diary. Comments are taken on board with action plans set as to how and when these will be completed. Each improvement is fed back to both parents and staff which foster open and honest relationships. Regular appraisals highlight any issues such as training needs and so increases staff's commitment to developing. Peer observations further encourage a reflective view of each individual's strengths and weaknesses and demonstrate the settings strong capacity to improve. Management consistently gather the views of all those connected with the nursery and as a group, staff collectively evaluate their setting. Recommendations made at the last inspection have all been swiftly addressed with improvements being continuously made for the benefit of the children. The nursery's vision for the future is to continue to successfully increase their outstanding relationships with parents with the aim of providing a holistic provision as the nursery prepares to expand. Exciting plans such as these clearly show the nursery's commitment to sustainability as they become a prominent feature within the community.

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

Children benefit from very high levels of regular exercise and fresh air that improves their healthy lifestyles and fully promotes their physical development and well-being. Their dietary and oral needs are carefully considered and implemented as a natural part of their daily routine. Children become familiar with the need for brushing their teeth, understanding why some foods may cause tooth decay. Independence is continuously fostered as children skilfully cut their own fruit and vegetables for snack or as they butter their warm toast, reminding their new friends that this is how you hold the knife. Children are encouraged to access fresh

drinking water from the water cooler whenever they wish, along with a relaxed approach to having a snack if they are hungry. Staff actively prepare areas so they are safe and hygienic, encouraging excellent manners as children clear up after themselves and wash their hands. This flexible and relaxed approach extends to outdoor play as children excitedly get into their coats and line up in preparation to go outside. Children are familiar with their own safety as they patiently wait for staff to check areas prior to their use. Wheeled toys such as cars and trikes provide children with lots of enjoyment, whilst others paint letters on walls with water and brushes, further extending their mark making skills. Staff often bring many resources outside or allow children to choose what they need in order to further extend their play. Furthermore, the weather is not seen as an issue but as a challenge of how staff can maximise learning opportunities whilst keeping children safe.

The nursery's ability to meet the learning and development requirements are outstanding. A great amount of hard work, time and effort has gone into the planning and how they organise the play areas available within the building. Although faced with some difficult physical barriers that include the large hall and sporadic attendance patterns, the management and staff have overcome these in order to provide children with an enjoyable, interesting and stimulating set of experiences. As a result, children comfortably leave their parents. Careful consideration is given to those children who are new as well thought out structures are put into place that ensure that they are fully supported whilst parents are sensitively reassured. Old shoe boxes are recycled as they are decorated and filled with personal items that the children have picked themselves. These are then brought out to help children develop the strong link between home and nursery; to encourage their sense of belonging and provide opportunities that secure their ability to settle. As a result, new children feel valued and start to show an affinity with the staff and their peers. This attention to detail along with the amount of flexibility within staff practice allows children to build firm relationships with staff as they, in their own time, become familiar with their new surroundings. Planning is exemplary and demonstrates the high level of professionalism and expertise of staff. Moreover, staff clearly love their job and really enjoy coming to work. This level of dedication and motivation ensures children excel in all areas of development. As they arrive and throughout the sessions considerable time is spent talking to children as staff engage in meaningful conversations which lead onto new ideas or challenges. Next steps within the planning are used flexibly and not pinned down to a set time or activity. This allows staff the freedom to explore many new avenues with the children through everyday routines or during spontaneous events. Children are completely unaware of what is happening and so are more engaged and stimulated through these natural occurrences. They become excited as they play hide and seek, hurriedly trying to find somewhere to hide as the staff member loudly counts backwards. Children scream with delight, helping each other and working together as they anticipate the moment they will be found.

Children records completed by the staff show parents, carers and professionals working with them the excellent progress they are making. Considerable attention is given to these plans and the observations and assessment processes which although are simple are extremely effective. Particular attention is paid to those children with additional needs. As a result, staff are skilled at fully supporting those children with either English as an additional language or those with a disability or

learning difficulty. This is further extended to helping all children understand the wider world. Festivals, cultures, gender issues, religion and much more are promoted in such a way that effectively encourages children's full appreciation of others no matter how different they are. This in turn highlights their own sense of belonging, the importance of their community and the church, whilst acknowledging just how unique and special they are.

Children excel in areas such as phonics, mark making, problem solving and prediction as staff are highly qualified in the delivery of the learning and development requirements. Their ability to maximise each and every opportunity enables them to encourage active learning as children eagerly read a wide range of media, explore sound, images and text in everyday play. Children's confidence in these areas is outstanding and is consistently evident throughout the inspection. Recent training in the use of schema's further extends staff's ability to understand a child's motivation for doing something. From there, they can then extend their learning by matching curriculum content based on their individual interests. Again, this commitment to improving a child's development is clearly inspiring and unique.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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