

St Thomas Pre-School

St Thomas C of E Primary School, Astley Street, LEIGH, Lancashire, WN7 2BP

Inspection date	05/12/2014
Previous inspection date	27/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn. As a result, children are making good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points.
- Children's personal and emotional development is very well supported through an effective key-person system. As a result, children are independent and emotionally well prepared for their next stage in learning.
- Partnership arrangements are very well established. As a result, children's individual needs are fully supported and appropriate intervention is sought promptly to support children's additional needs.
- Practitioners are fully meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements and there is a shared understanding and responsibility of how to protect children.
- Practice is effectively monitored. As a result, improvements are continuously made to the learning experiences available to children.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Practitioners provide fewer opportunities for children to make marks and write in a meaningful context in each area of provision.
- Practitioners provide fewer materials of different textures and medias for children to explore and experiment with during some creative activities.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager.
- The inspector looked at observation and assessment records.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation and the improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of the parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Suzanne Fenwick

Full report

Information about the setting

St Thomas Pre-School was registered in 2002 on the Early Years Register. It operates from a detached constructed building, located on the site of St Thomas Church of England Primary School in the Leigh area of Wigan. The pre-school and is managed by a voluntary committee and serves the local are. It operates from one playroom and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, two staff hold an appropriate qualification at level 3 and one holds an appropriate qualification at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am and 12.15pm until 3.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 35 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports some children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance children's opportunities to make marks and write in a meaningful context in each area of provision, during every session

- extend children's opportunities to explore and experiment by providing a greater variety of materials during creative activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Practitioners at this pre-school have a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn; as a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good. The practitioners have high expectations for all the children in their care. They take the time to get to know them so they can offer them challenging and interesting activities and the individualised support they require. As a result, children enjoy playing, are keen learners, and are enthusiastic about what they do. Practitioners encourage children to make choices and decisions in their play; therefore, they are developing their independence skills. All children make good progress in their learning because teaching methods match children's individual needs. Practitioners have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They observe children as they play. They keep detailed records of children's progress and current interests, which they use to inform the planning to support children's next steps in learning. The manager and practitioners all contribute to the planning process, which is shared with parents. Practitioners ensure that children are offered a balanced range of

play opportunities that promote each area of learning and are based on their interests. However, children's opportunities to make marks and write for a purpose in a meaningful context are not widely available in each area of provision. For example, there is no writing equipment in the role-play area to further support children's imaginative play. Children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by experienced practitioners, so that they continue to make good progress. Practitioners work in partnership with the other professionals in supporting children and their families so they fully understand children's needs. They work well to complement the strategies used by other professionals to help them to progress in their development. Children's physical development is promoted well. For example, they enjoy weekly physical education lessons, which include obstacle courses, running and catching games, singing songs and action and stretching activities.

Children are supported in developing the necessary skills for effective learning. Their self-esteem and confidence is supported by practitioners in all that they do. Good interaction helps children to develop their language and communication skills. Practitioners challenge children by asking them questions that encourage them to think critically for themselves and help them to solve simple problems. For example, a group of children engage in an interactive number activity using the white board. The children listen to the practitioner as she explains what they have to do, so that they know how to play. Children learn to take turns and wait patiently for their go. The practitioner skilfully supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and help them to successfully take part. Children are encouraged to talk to her throughout the game, especially if they are struggling. The practitioner sensitively introduces words and vocabulary to prompt the children to use these words during their game. She encourages them to count the numbers on the screen and put them in the correct order, supporting their mathematical development. Thoughtful daily procedures help children to settle and to extend their social and communication skills. For example, on arrival, the children find their name card and place it on the registration board. Children participate in a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. For example, a group of children enjoy sitting in the den and interacting with their peers, while another group takes part in a letters and sounds activity with their key person where they learn about rhyming words. Children's independence is promoted successfully throughout the pre-school where they make their own choices and decisions about what they do during the day. Children develop a sense of belonging because their artwork is valued by practitioners and is either displayed in the pre-school room or the children can take it home. However, during adult-led creative activities the practitioners only provide children with a limited range of materials to select. As a result, their opportunities to explore and experiment are not fully maximised.

Practitioners establish a good partnership with parents by getting to know the families well. They encourage all parents to undertake their own initial assessment of their child. This enables the key person to complete a full assessment of children's starting points upon entry. This information informs the planning and helps with the monitoring of children's progress. Practitioners value the parents role in their children's learning. They take the time to speak with them on arrival and at collection times and constantly encourage them to share updates about what their children do at home through the completion of wow moment observations, which the key person uses to inform their

planning. Practitioners share information about children's development with parents through written records containing photographs, observations and ongoing assessments. Parents are confident to approach their child's key person for advice and to share information. Practitioners support the parents in obtaining further help from other professionals when required. They work together with these professionals to help children improve in their development and to reach their full potential before starting school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key-person system is firmly established in the pre-school. Practitioners are highly skilled and support children extremely well and establish excellent partnership working arrangements with parents. They help new children to settle in with ease because they work very closely with parents and the primary school to establish an effective settling-in programme, which is tailored to meet the children's individual needs, where required. Parents and children are invited in to an open day, which gives the key person the opportunity to gather all the information they require, and to get to know the needs of each child to enable them to offer targeted support. Children are happy and confident in all that they do and show high levels of self-control during activities. This is because they feel safe and secure and develop excellent relationships with all the practitioners. Children engage extremely well with practitioners and talk to them as they play, confidently asking them for help when they require it. Children spend plenty of time with their key person and key group, for example, during snack time and focused activities. Consequently, children have formed strong friendships with their peers. Practitioners constantly promote children's emotional well-being, self-help and social skills. They make children feel welcome, valued and respected; therefore, children are positive learners, exceptionally well behaved and highly motivated in their play. As a result, they are emotionally equipped and well prepared for their future moves, including to school.

Careful consideration is given to ensuring that all areas of provision are interesting and well resourced. For example, practitioners provide children with a wide variety of accessible open-ended resources both in and outdoors. Children help themselves to them and use their imaginations extremely well. Children access fresh air and exercise daily. Children are able to move between the indoor and outside environment freely, as a result, they are able to make choices about where to play. Children enjoy engaging in regular physical education lessons, which supports their muscle development and coordination skills extremely well. Children are also experimenting with different ways of moving and learning how to negotiate space. During free play, practitioners allow the children to continue their activities for as long as they wish to before moving them on. This enables children to have as much time as they need to finish what they are doing. Children are highly independent as they help to tidy away the toys, serve themselves at snack times and manage their own personal care needs. They are offered excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating. Practitioners talk to children about the food they are eating and where it has come from. They enjoy a healthy snack, which is a variety of fruit and a packed lunch. Practitioners support parents very well through providing them with guidance about healthy lunch boxes choices.

Practitioners are enthusiastic and demonstrate a genuine care and respect for everyone, thereby creating a positive and inclusive environment. As a result, children are exceptionally well behaved. They gain an excellent understanding of how to manage their own behaviour because practitioners offer them clear guidance about what is acceptable and what is not. This helps children to understand the consequence of their actions. Practitioners encourage children to be kind towards each other, help them to learn to wait their turn, and to listen to others. As a result, children learn the skills they require for school. Children are supported well in developing their self-care skills. For example, they remove their own shoes and put on their pumps before they start their physical education lesson and put on their own coats when going outside to play. Children are supported extremely well in gaining a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they take part in stranger danger and road safety activities, which are reinforced when they visit the local community on regular short trips. Practitioners also remind children to be careful when walking on the leaves and climbing on the tyres outside because they are slippery. As a result, children demonstrate that they are learning to think about risks and how to manage them, appropriate to their age.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is consistently and effectively promoted. The manager and practitioners have a good understanding of their responsibility to ensure that they meet the safeguarding and welfare, and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The enthusiastic approach of the manager ensures that highly effective working relationships are established within the team. All practitioners are proactive in ensuring children's safety and have a good awareness of safeguarding issues. They understand the procedures to follow and who to contact in the event of any concerns about children or their colleagues. All practitioners have undertaken safeguarding training and follow strict procedures and policies to protect children at all times. For example, all visitors to the pre-school are recorded and they are never left unsupervised with children. Robust recruitment procedures and ongoing suitability checks ensure that all those in contact with the children are suitable. Children's welfare is further promoted through implementing effective risk assessments to ensure that children play in a safe and secure environment. At arrival and collection times, practitioners monitor the doors to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised. Parents sign their children in and out of the pre-school and the practitioners take their own register. Exterior doors and gates are secure. They cannot be opened by children or parents to gain entry into the pre-school room. Visitors to the setting have their identity checked and their attendance is recorded. This ensures children are cared for in a very safe environment.

The committee, practitioners, parents and children are provided with opportunities to be involved in evaluating the quality of the pre-school. They make good use of the various systems they have in place, such as committee meetings, staff meetings, discussions with parents and questionnaires, to inform the self-evaluation process. Practitioners maintain a focused improvement plan with the support of the local authority worker, which highlights target areas they wish to improve. All the previous recommendations have been

implemented and they have successfully improved children's access to the outdoor environment, and the quality and range of information communication technology available to them. The manager and practitioners work well together. They all have a wealth of experience and continue to develop the pre-school and their own professional development. They set high standards for the setting and have high expectations for children. The manager ensures that practitioners are well supported in their work and are given opportunities to attend any training that they are interested in. This has a positive impact on children because staff introduce new ideas to help support children's learning. For example, there is a lead practitioner who takes responsibility for the letters and sounds programme, and another who takes responsibility for the physical education lessons, because they have attended effective training. Practitioners undertake peer observations as a way of reflecting on and sharing good practices. The manager takes advice from the local authority development workers to improve the setting's practice and action plans are well targeted to make continued improvements.

Practitioners work in partnership with a number of external agencies. Practitioners have a good understanding of the help these professionals can offer, which supports them in seeking future help and support for the children and their families. The setting's good partnership working with parents ensures that parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Parents report that the manager and the practitioners are very supportive and provide them with plenty of suggestions for how they can promote their children's learning at home. For example, using home learning activity bags. They state that their children love attending and are always happy and settle with ease. They appreciate and value the information and the communication systems in place, which include daily discussions, progress reports and termly meetings. The pre-school has excellent links with the primary school. In preparation for children moving onto school, the pre-school staff accompany children on visits to their new classroom where they have the opportunity to meet the teachers, which helps them settle-in.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY248592
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	855902
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	35
Name of provider	St Thomas Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	27/01/2009
Telephone number	01942 263 533

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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