

Thorns Pre-School

Thorns Primary School, Thorns Road, BRIERLEY HILL, West Midlands, DY5 2JY

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| Inspection date | 08/01/2015 |
| Previous inspection date | 04/02/2010 |

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| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | 1 |
| | Previous inspection: | 1 |
| How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend | | 1 |
| 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 | | 1 |

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff have an exceptional understanding of how children learn and develop. Children enjoy varied and challenging play and learning opportunities, based on their individual interests and next steps in learning.
- Children are supported exceedingly well to gain independence and develop personal care skills as staff encourage them to do challenging things for themselves.
- Extremely effective safeguarding practices are implemented by staff to comprehensively promote children's well-being and ensure their safety at all times.
- There are highly successful systems in place to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the provision. The management team is driven to improve outcomes for children and inspire practitioners to be fully involved in this process.
- Children make excellent progress over time in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- Inclusion is given high priority and successful partnerships between parents, carers and other agencies ensure that all children's needs are fully met at all times.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the premises.
- The inspector talked to staff and children and held a meeting with the management team.
- The inspector observed indoor and outdoor activities and conducted a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation including policies, children's records, learning journeys and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability for all adults working on the premises.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents on the day.

Inspector

Sandra Meacham

Full report

Information about the setting

Thorns Pre-School opened in 1989 and operates from a self-contained mobile building within the ground of Thorns Primary School, in Brierley Hill, West Midlands. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is currently open each weekday from 8.40am to 11.40am, during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play and Forest Schools area. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 18 children attending who are in the early years age group and come from the local community. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs five staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one with Early Years Professional status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enrich the excellent experiences offered through Forest School activities further, so that children have even more opportunities to benefit to the highest level from these learning experiences.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are provided with a wide range of exciting and challenging experiences by staff that have an excellent understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They know the children extremely well. Observation, planning and assessment routines are secure and are integral in supporting children's individual interests and next steps in their learning and development. Any gaps in development are identified and planning is sharply focused, so that children make excellent progress considering their starting points, age and capabilities. For example, as a result of this process, speech and language support is provided for some children in pre-school. The quality of teaching across all areas of learning is consistently high. The balance of adult-led activities and plentiful opportunities for children to follow their own interests means that the characteristics of effective learning are promoted exceedingly well. Enjoyment is evident as children enthusiastically make dough and are encouraged to independently add ingredients while following a recipe. The children are extremely confident and self-assured. Children's learning and development is monitored very effectively and their progress recorded in individual learning journey files. This provides parents with a very accurate overview of their child's development during their time at pre-school and the excellent progress they make. Staff work well in partnership with parents to support the children in their learning, for example, activity bags are sent home

on a regular basis. These link activities done at pre-school to things that children can do at home. An open door policy ensures that parents are welcomed into pre-school and are able to access their child's learning journey and celebrate their 'wow moments' and successes.

The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is organised to allow children to select and access resources independently. There are strong links across all areas of learning; for example, children have opportunities to see and recognise the meaning of letters and words during their imaginary play in the cafe area, this helps them understand that print has a meaning and a purpose. Staff play expertly alongside children as they follow their own interests. Staff are skilled at extending children's vocabulary, pronounce words clearly, use lots of descriptive language and demonstrate consistently high communication skills. During an adult led activity, using mirrors to identify specific facial features; children are expertly challenged to match the description that they hear to their own face. The children are actively encouraged to develop their thinking and problem solving skills, as staff guide and support children's play with their varied teaching techniques. They give children time to play and concentrate on activities and help them to work together to solve problems and clarify ideas. During snack time, children very confidently demonstrate their self-help skills. Everyone is valued and staff make sure some of the quieter children develop their confidence to talk and feel included.

Children are active learners and join in activities enthusiastically. Staff place a strong focus on being active and playing outdoors. All children confidently explore the outside space; there are two distinct areas, one of which is the Forest Schools area. This has been significantly developed since the last inspection and is a major strength of the pre-school. Children experience pond-dipping, climbing trees, den building and cooking around a campfire, supported by a highly motivated Forest Schools leader who ensures optimal levels of challenge and safety at all times. In the other outdoor area, staff are skilled at extending children's problem solving and mathematical vocabulary, while building a series of connecting pipes to roll balls from one end to the other; staff ask open ended questions as, for example, they ask children to consider what would happen to the ball if the pipe were shorter. Children are developing the skills and attitudes needed to get them ready for their next stage of learning.

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

The excellent key-person system is well established enabling parents to share important information about their children, and parents spoken to during the inspection commented that it works exceptionally well in practice. Excellent relationships with parents are evident when they arrive and leave the setting. Children behave well, because they are extremely settled and happy. They are lively and confident and approach staff for help and support throughout the session. Staff are calm and caring, communicating respectfully with children and each other, creating a positive learning environment. Children are very effectively learning about self-care and personal hygiene through consistent routines and staff support. They are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet, because if they put their hands in their mouths they now have new germs on them.

Planning for all activities is thorough and includes opportunities for children to take risks relative to their age. Staff are vigilant and supervise the children well as their safety and well-being is given utmost importance. This helps children to develop an understanding about their own safety and how to use the environment and resources in a safe way.

Fully inclusive practice for all children is further supported by highly effective and close partnerships with other professionals and agencies. Children who speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported extremely effectively by knowledgeable staff. There are robust procedures in place to monitor any needs that an individual child may have and ensure that support agencies and parents are fully involved when necessary. Consequently, all children make excellent progress relative to their starting points. Children are able to follow routines, express their own ideas fluently and work collaboratively. As a result, they develop the key skills in readiness to support their future learning, including school.

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

Self-evaluation is comprehensive, reflective and used to drive the continual improvement of provision at the pre-school. The management team is motivated, focused and supportive of all the staff. They evaluate weekly planning done as a team, using both formal and informal observations of children's interests and next steps and key-person observations. They analyse the coverage and check that all the areas of learning are not only being covered but include appropriate levels of challenge. As result of this precise and focused analysis, the progress of children is tracked and informs further planning so that learning opportunities are maximised. This ensures children's care and learning needs are extremely well met. High quality staff performance is ensured through the regular staff and supervision meetings and appraisals. Staff training is closely linked to supervision targets and staff disseminate new training information to other members of staff during planned in-house training sessions. This means that maximum impact is achieved and the whole staff team is continually reflecting on and improving their performance and practice. Detailed action plans drive improvement targets and are part of this continuous and rigorous assessment process. This includes a plan to expand the Forest School activities even further to enrich children's experiential learning. A fully comprehensive range of policies, procedures and documentation ensures the safe and efficient management of the provision.

All staff have an excellent understanding of child protection, and know the procedure to follow in the event of a concern about a child in their care or equally a member of staff's conduct. A robust daily risk assessment of all areas of the nursery identifies potential hazards identified and minimised immediately. Staff are appointed following a robust recruitment and vetting procedure, systems are in place to ensure all adults are suitable. Legally required records for children's welfare are accurately maintained, for example attendance and medical records. Excellent deployment of staff ensures children are consistently supervised, and therefore, remain safe at all times.

Children's needs are exceptionally well met through highly effective partnerships with

parents, other settings and external agencies. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection are very happy with the care and learning that is provided by the pre-school. They are confident that their children are safe, and express that this is a major concern for them as the pre-school is situated on a very busy main road. They say that children are helped to settle quickly and happily, and make good progress.

The Childcare Register

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| The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are | Met |
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| The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are | Met |
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What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | EY243072 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 848324 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 17 |
| Total number of places | 36 |
| Number of children on roll | 18 |
| Name of provider | Thorns Pre-School Committee |
| Date of previous inspection | 04/02/2010 |
| Telephone number | 01384 818 312 |

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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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