

# St. Thomas More Montessori Pre School



St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School, South Road, SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex,  
CB11 3DW

<b>Inspection date</b>	13 May 2016
Previous inspection date	19 November 2008

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is outstanding

- The inspirational leaders work tirelessly to drive forward improvement. The pursuit of excellence in all that they do helps children to reach superb levels of achievement.
- The provider and manager make a significant contribution to the pre-school and wider community. They are both tutors of Montessori qualifications at levels 3 and 4. In addition, they share their expert practice to help other providers work towards delivering high-quality learning for children.
- Children excel in the environment of rich learning opportunities. Montessori educational resources and more traditional toys complement the highly effective teaching methods of the extremely well-qualified staff.
- Exemplary relationships between staff members provide an excellent role model for children. Staff show enthusiasm for their daily roles and speak highly of the support they receive through regular supervision. They are keen to develop professionally and to continually enhance their already excellent practice.
- The manager demonstrates exceptional partnership working as she liaises closely with a multitude of other agencies. She takes on the role of lead professional and draws on her expertise to engage successfully with parents in a diverse range of situations. This helps to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and their families.
- Parents have only high praise for the pre-school and the commitment of staff. They relish the endless opportunities available for them to participate in shared learning experiences. Fathers talk fondly of having their feet painted during activity days. Parents lead storytime sessions and grandparents take part in planned outings.

## 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 very good understanding of the world and people in the community.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning. She spoke to children throughout the inspection and accompanied them to the school hall for lunch.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and held discussions with the headmistress of the school and all members of staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider and the manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the pre-school self-evaluation form, recent audits of practice and staff's professional development portfolios.
- The inspector viewed a range of children's observation and assessment records as part of an online system, which is also used to record and monitor their patterns of attendance.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection, including those arranged by previous appointment, and took account of their views.
- The inspector saw evidence of the suitability of all persons working on the premises and other documentation in relation to the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

### Inspector

Rachel Pepper

## Inspection findings

### Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The manager's systems for reflective practice are meticulous. She actively seeks and responds to the views of parents and children. In addition, she has undergone intensive inspections of all aspects of practice to maintain her Montessori accreditation and gain an Autism friendly bronze award. Highly focused recruitment and induction procedures result in staff who are valued for the individual skills that they bring to the team. The manager works closely with school teachers and the other settings that children attend to follow up on their achievements and to support continuity. This helps her to determine how she can further tailor the learning programmes to help build on children's already excellent skills in readiness for school. Safeguarding is effective. Rigorous training during team meetings and regular discussions help to ensure that a culture of vigilance is maintained. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of child protection and other safeguarding matters.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Children are highly motivated and very eager to learn. They choose from an abundance of well-organised group activities or set out individual mats to establish their own workspace. They make informed decisions from the outset of their day from what they wish to have for lunch to how they will manage their time. Children practise their dexterity as they knead bread dough and paint pictures. They engage in discussions with adults about snails and scary spiders they have observed in the bug house. They learn about life cycles as they prepare to release tadpoles into a pond. Adults use high-quality observation and assessment methods to provide children with consistent challenge and swiftly target any gaps in learning. For example, they empower children who are working towards building friendships to invite friends to take part in an activity. Future plans include providing even more experiences to enhance children's understanding of people and communities.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children's welfare and development are central to everything practitioners do. The effective key-person system is complemented by highly skilled and sensitive staff who know each child well. Children develop secure, warm attachments to all staff who expertly step in as needed to provide support. The highly inclusive environment ensures children who struggle with times of change are fully supported. Potentially challenging situations are skilfully managed and result in children regaining self-control. Staff recognise when children have high levels of energy and quickly enable access to the large-school playground. This gives children opportunity to increase their levels of physical activity and they vigorously pedal wheeled bicycles with friends.

### Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make extremely good progress from their starting points. They are skilful communicators who show high levels of confidence in social situations. Children who joined with limited social skills now embrace the lunchtime experience. The manager has established exceptionally close links to the school and children benefit from the use of a wide range of facilities, including the library, school hall and nearby woodland area, to broaden their learning experiences.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY372721
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	849737
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Day care type</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	61
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Michelle Deanna Wisbey
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP513790
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 November 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01371 831902

St. Thomas More Montessori Pre School was registered in 2008. The pre-school follows the Montessori approach to practice and employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with early years professional status and two with qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 3pm, term time. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and supports those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs or disability.

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