

St Thomas Pre-School

Marton Street, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1XX



Inspection date	12 May 2016
Previous inspection date	24 May 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Children settle well into the pre-school. Staff warmly welcome them on arrival and provide a caring and nurturing environment. Children develop close bonds and secure relationships with the staff who support their emotional well-being very effectively.
- Children's progress is good. The highly qualified staff make good use of observational assessments to help them to identify the learning priorities for all the children attending the pre-school.
- Staff are kind and considerate, friendly and approachable. Children are happy and demonstrate that they feel safe and secure. They confidently take part in a wide range of interesting activities where they have fun and enjoy themselves in their learning.
- Staff establish good relationships with parents. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through regular discussions and meetings. Staff work well with the other settings children may attend and the other professionals involved with them to support their care, learning and welfare.
- Children enjoy playing outside where their physical development is well supported. They have daily opportunities to be active while playing in the garden area and on walks in the local community.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff, occasionally, miss opportunities to challenge and extend children's thinking skills.
- Children do not have enough experiences to develop their understanding of and extend their interest in information and communication technology.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the quality of teaching, so that children have more experiences to try, test and build on their ideas
- enhance opportunities for children to explore, embed and extend their technological skills.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the policies and procedures, self-evaluation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Carys Millican

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures help to ensure that staff and committee members are suitable to work with children. All staff are trained in safeguarding and fully understand their role and responsibility should they have a child protection concern. The highly qualified manager and experienced staff team regularly update and improve their knowledge through relevant training. Staff observe and assess children's learning during play to identify any gaps in their development. Summative assessments are shared and completed with parents to form a more comprehensive record of children's ongoing achievements. Parents speak in high regard of the, 'Fantastic' and 'flexible' service the staff provide and recognise the good quality of care and education that their children receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children's independence and self-confidence are effectively supported by staff. They listen to the children and follow their interests and motivation for learning. Scientific experiences encourage a multisensory approach, increasing children's engagement and providing them with good capacity for their continuous learning. Children are excited to investigate and observe the visual changes of seeds growing indoors and then transfer them to the garden outside. They create collage pictures and learn how to mix colours together. Children listen carefully to others during group activities and learn about money exchange during imaginary visits to a cafe in the role play area. Staff encourage children to work together to complete the weather and calendar displays. Children successfully develop the early speech and phonic skills they need to help them with their future learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

The well established key-person system helps children to settle quickly. Children are happy and content and clearly enjoy their time in the pre-school. They especially benefit from the welcoming and safe environment staff provide. Children confidently move around the well-organised play areas, following the daily routine. They learn how to keep themselves safe by standing in a line to wait to go into the 'bee room' or outside into the garden play area. Children are well behaved and are beginning to learn to take turns and to respect each other's thoughts during group activities. They play harmoniously together. Staff encourage good hygiene practices and provide a clean environment for children to play in. They promote healthy lifestyles and talk to children about nutritious snacks and meals.

Outcomes for children are good

Children's communication and language are promoted well and they engage in worthwhile activities. For example, they take part in singing sessions, phonics and show and tell activities which help to promote their confidence and speaking in front of a group. All children, including those who receive funded education, make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, such as their eventual move to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	309486
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	864923
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	18
Name of provider	St Thomas Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	24 May 2011
Telephone number	01524 60652

St Thomas Pre-School was registered in 1992. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds level 2. The manager holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 1pm, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 9am until 3.30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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