

St Thomas Pre-School

Marton Street, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 1XX



Inspection date	28 February 2019
Previous inspection date	12 May 2016

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of 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 pre-school is expertly run and managed. The manager, deputy and members of the committee work together particularly well. They are extremely knowledgeable, highly skilled and qualified. Together they draw upon their experience and expertise to provide superb support and guidance for the staff team.
- Teaching is inspirational. All staff have very high expectations of what each child can achieve. They seize every opportunity for learning, asking wonderfully posed questions that engage, enthuse and ignite children's learning and interest. All children make excellent progress from their starting points.
- There is a culture of reflective practice in place. The manager and staff are entirely invested and show firm commitment to continuously improving the already excellent practice in place. Self-evaluation is ongoing, incisive and leads to targeted improvement plans that have a substantial impact on outcomes for children.
- Staff passionately embrace the diversity of the children and their families. They provide an exceptional range of resources, activities and experiences that greatly promote a wide understanding, respect and celebration of difference. Children recently enjoyed celebrating their family cultures and traditions at the pre-school International Day.
- Partnerships with parents are highly effective. Parents are closely involved in the care that their children receive. A collaborative approach is used very successfully to build fully on children's learning. Parents praise the wonderful care, support and learning opportunities that staff provide for their children.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive superb support. Staff work exceptionally effectively with parents, other professionals and external agencies to meet children's learning and care needs.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are highly skilled in providing children with the skills to independently manage their behaviour and solve problems. As a result, they effectively create an environment of mutual respect and understanding where children develop skills in sharing, taking turns and working collaboratively together.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the implementation of the planned changes to the enhancement of the outdoor areas and evaluate the impact of this on children's learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and the impact this has on children's learning, during play inside and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and held a meeting with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and other written comments.
- The inspector looked at children's records, evidence of the suitability of staff and a range of other documentation, including policies and procedures.

Inspector

Katie Sparrow

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding and their individual responsibilities to protect children. The manager highly values the staff team and provides excellent support through supervisions and performance management. The professional development of the staff team is sharply focused and helps to maintain the exceptional quality of teaching already in place. Detailed monitoring of children's progress helps to ensure any gaps in learning are immediately identified. The impact of this is shown in the excellent interest and progress children are making in their mathematics, following the swift implementation of specific programmes of support. Staff are currently working on enhancing the already excellent opportunities children have to explore their learning outside.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Highly effective systems of observation and planning are implemented with outstanding results. For example, planning is done 'in the moment', where staff use their expert knowledge to seize opportunities for children to progress. Staff accurately assess children's learning and, together with information from parents, plan spontaneously to draw out children's knowledge and build on it there and then. Children become deeply involved in their learning. For example, following children's interest in volcanos, staff suggest they make their own. Staff's superb teaching skills take children on a journey of learning across many areas, successfully embedding and creating new opportunities for learning. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported extremely well. Children have excellent opportunities to play and learn in their home language and develop their English speaking skills extremely well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

The emotional well-being of the children is at the very heart of the pre-school's practice. Staff's sensitive, encouraging and enthusiastic approach provides a particularly strong base for developing children's independence and significantly increases their confidence in their own abilities. Children thrive in this caring and nurturing environment and develop highly meaningful relationships with their key person and staff they regularly see. Staff are creative about engaging children in understanding and valuing the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, children particularly enjoy joining in with the story of 'Kitchen Disco', which takes a fun and practical approach to learning about the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Children are articulate communicators who listen extremely well and make valuable contributions to discussions. All children follow instructions and demonstrate excellent listening skills. Older children learn to form the letters of their name and begin to link letters to sounds. Children show excellent imaginative skills, building stories using the available resources and inviting others to join in their narrative. Children are widely independent and extremely well prepared in readiness for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	309486
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10064217
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	15
Name of registered person	St Thomas Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518567
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2016
Telephone number	01524 60652

St Thomas Pre-School registered in 1992. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, including the manager, who holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 1pm, Mondays and Fridays, and from 9am until 3.30pm, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

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