

# Inspection of St Thomas More Pre-School

St Thomas More Pre-School, St Thomas of Canterbury Centre, The Priest's House,  
Lucks Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HN

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Inspection date: 10 November 2021

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children happily arrive at the pre-school. Staff are ready to welcome them with information about activities and resources that they know will excite them. For example, staff had themed stickers on hand, which sparked children's interest in making a fairy picture. Children, including those who are new to the pre-school, build strong relationships with their key person. This enables them to settle quickly and to promptly engage in purposeful learning experiences. Children develop good communication and language skills. For example, they showed great imaginations as they extended a conversation from a book about a spider to discussions about where he would live. This included him having a suitcase, how many socks he would need and the hats he would wear.

Children develop warm and caring friendships with other children. For example, they encourage other children to join in their imaginative play at a restaurant. They manage to organise their roles between themselves. Children develop a good understanding of what they do can affect others. Staff support this with effective techniques, such as using sand timers to help children learn to share resources. Children access a curriculum that staff plan effectively to challenge and extend each individual child's learning.

### What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children learn to do simple tasks for themselves through effective guidance and demonstrations from staff. For example, rather than staff hanging up coats and giving out lunch boxes, they show children how to do it and help them persevere to achieve the desired outcome. Staff continually celebrate and reward children for their achievements who take great pride in their successes. This enhances children's sense of well-being.
- Children access a good range of experiences that support their enjoyment of learning. However, staff do not explore how children can access from the wealth of stored resources. This means that children cannot always choose what they want to play with to enable them to fully take the lead in their learning choices.
- The well-qualified staff team is highly skilled in building children's vocabulary throughout all activities. For example, at snack time, they not only help children to identify different fruit, but also add describing words, such as crunchy and juicy. Also, during yoga sessions, they introduce words such as walrus and iceberg. This enhances communication development as well as physical skills, including balancing.
- Children thoroughly enjoy story and singing sessions, which are purposefully targeted for each child's ability and stage of learning. Younger children take great delight in finding the pieces of fruit for the very hungry caterpillar and watch in awe as the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. Older children learn

about rhyming words and see the funny side of the story.

- The manager constantly works in partnership with her staff to keep fully aware of their well-being. She ensures they have time during their working day to complete tasks, which in turn enables them to focus on the care and education of the children. Staff report that as a small team they all work together to provide high-quality care and education.
- The manager and staff continually review their practice to highlight areas where they can make well-targeted improvements. Staff receive good levels of training to build on their professionalism and increase their knowledge. This training enables staff to support the individual needs of children.
- Staff work successfully to develop and maintain effective partnerships with parents. They have found alternative ways to help parents to have an insight into daily activities, while they are unable to enter the setting due to the pandemic. Parents comment highly about the pre-school and the quality of care and education that the staff provide.
- Children learn about some celebrations from different cultures around the world. However, staff do not purposefully plan ways in which they can successfully embrace the heritage and cultural backgrounds of all the children attending. This does not fully support children's awareness of similarities and differences.
- Staff successfully seek additional support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They actively engage with other professionals and use their guidance to strengthen their knowledge of how to best support individual children. This enables all children to make the progress they are capable of.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff, including the designated safeguarding leads, have a clear understanding of child protection and the wider aspects of safeguarding. All staff complete regular training and take part in quizzes to test their knowledge and remain up to date. Staff know their role and responsibilities in child protection and the importance of making prompt referrals should they have any concerns about a child. This supports children and their families' welfare. Staff undertake effective risk assessments of the pre-school environment, helping to reduce and minimise any potential hazards. The manager follows safe recruitment procedures to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- increase staff's understanding of how to embrace children's cultural backgrounds and how to plan more effectively for this
- explore further ways to enable children to access from the wide variety of

resources and to select for themselves.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	127631
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210824
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	18
<b>Name of registered person</b>	St Thomas More Church Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP910085
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 874559
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 April 2017

## Information about this early years setting

St Thomas More Pre-School registered in 1990 and is in West Malling, Kent. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time. Sessions operate from 9am to midday and from midday to 3pm, except on Tuesday afternoon. The pre-school employs six members of staff, all of who hold an appropriate early years qualification. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Helen Penticost

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager, spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed documentation to the inspector that demonstrated the suitability of staff.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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