

Inspection of St Thomas More Play Group

102 Mainway, Middleton, Manchester, Lancashire M24 1PP

Inspection date: 11 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff at the playgroup have high expectations for children and this shines through. Children benefit from lots of hands-on experiences, which promotes their learning and progress. Furthermore, they are happy and safe in the child-focused environment.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents do not enter the playgroup. However, children have adapted to the new routines well and confidently wave their parents off at the gate. Children are warmly welcomed by the staff, which gives them a good sense of belonging. They bound into the playgroup and actively join in singing the 'good morning song'.

Children are eager to learn and thoroughly enjoy the activities that are freely available. Their independence is supported well. For example, children tend to their own physical needs. They also develop good self-care skills as they have a go at putting on their outdoor clothes and wellington boots. Children thoroughly enjoy playing football and jumping in muddy puddles. They are extremely happy and motivated in their learning.

Children achieve well and demonstrate high levels of concentration. For example, they cooperate well and make decisions about how to build a ramp for the pretend cars. They are extremely proud of their end product. Children behave well and have a can-do attitude to learning. Their learning is further enhanced because staff demonstrate positive behaviours. For example, staff offer age-appropriate explanations to aid children's understanding.

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

- Intentions for children's learning are well embedded and clearly understood by all staff. However, staff do not always provide children with further challenge in their learning, to help them to make exceptional progress.
- Staff provide very good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, each child has their own personal lanyards and sensory bags that are individual to their needs. Staff also use visual aids to enhance children's communication. As a result, all children have a voice.
- Staff encourage children to join in with lots of singing to promote their communication and language development. Children also take part in yoga classes to help promote their well-being. For example, they enjoy choosing a different yoga pose, which helps to increase their balance, strength and coordination. Children are becoming adaptive movers.
- The manager has a clear ambition and passion for the role and future of the playgroup. She works closely with the local authority advisers and has attended

training to support the children with SEND. However, information from all training is not always shared with staff. This does not help to increase their knowledge and raise their teaching to a higher level.

- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents speak very positively of the playgroup staff and appreciate the regular updates they receive on their children's progress. Parents state that the playgroup has 'incredible and amazing staff'.
- Parents commend the staff for seeking support from other professionals. They also give good examples of how this has been 'instrumental' in gaining additional support for their children.
- The quality of education is a strength of the playgroup. The manager and staff have created an environment that supports the intent of an ambitious curriculum. Children are gaining lots of knowledge and skills in this vibrant playgroup. This prepares them well for their future learning.
- Staff are consistent in supporting children's good health and follow strict hygiene practices. There is a 'snuffle station' where children are encouraged to go to wipe their nose with the tissues provided. Children manage this task incredibly well. They also remember to wash their hands, which demonstrates that they are able to manage their personal care needs independently.
- The playgroup has gained a 'healthy grin' award for teaching children the importance of oral health. All children have their own toothbrush and brush their teeth to the 'toothbrush' song. This activity helps children to gain awareness of good teeth cleaning routines.
- Transitions to school are managed well. For example, Reception teachers visit children at the playgroup, and children enjoy visits to their new school. This partnership working provides a more relaxed transition for the children. It also enables them to build relationships with their new teachers and friends at their new school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff working with children are suitable. Staff have a good understanding of the playgroup's safeguarding policies. This helps to ensure children's safety and well-being. Staff treat children with the utmost respect and ensure their personal care needs are respected. For example, a curtain is placed around the nappy changing room. This means children's privacy is protected when their nappies are being changed. Staff are also confident in taking action should they be concerned about a colleague or member of the management team. Staff and managers use risk assessments effectively. These measures minimise any risks to children's safety and well-being

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff knowledge with feedback from training to raise their teaching to a high level
- provide children with further challenge in the curriculum to help maximise their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY556551
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10175051
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Mackridge, Gemma Marie
Registered person unique reference number	RP556550
Telephone number	07986696479
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Thomas More Play Group registered in 2018 and is situated in Middleton, Manchester. It opens Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12.30pm, during term time only. The playgroup employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate childcare qualification at level 3. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Martin

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 setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the playgroup and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.

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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