

# St Thomas Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	507656
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kashma Patel
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Thomas Pre-Schools Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Thomas Pre-school is one part of a chain of day nurseries which are privately owned. It has been registered since 1999. It operates from two main playrooms in St Thomas Church in Coventry. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area for outside play. The nursery serves the local area.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 38 children under eight years of age. There are currently 68 on roll; of these 38 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 15:00 all year round. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

There are 11 staff employed to work with the children, of which three are parent lunchtime supervisors. Seven staff have an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff promote good hygiene routines; for example, tables are cleaned with an anti-bacterial spray before food is served and children are provided with disposable wipes to clean their hands. In the bathroom there is a step by step guide to washing hands which promotes children's understanding of 'germs'. Their welfare is promoted because most staff have a current first aid certificate and can therefore respond to accidents appropriately.

Children's good health is sufficiently promoted through regular activities both inside and out in the garden. For example, staff ensure children are able to access the outdoors in most weather conditions by providing umbrellas for children. They are developing good hand and eye coordination through target practise activities where they throw bean bags in to small circles. Children enjoy hiding in the playhouse and manoeuvring wheeled toys which promotes their skills in coordination. Children receiving nursery funding enjoy pedalling bikes and completing obstacle courses in the large hall. However, they do not have regular opportunities to develop large muscle skills such as climbing, due to a lack of space and equipment in the garden.

Children are well nourished and have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating through routines. They freely access the 'snack table' where they enjoy a healthy range of snacks which meets their dietary requirements. Children are developing their independence as they pour their own drinks and help themselves to snacks. They are beginning to take responsibility, as they clear away after themselves by washing their plates and cups. Younger children are supervised at the snack table by staff where they talk about the benefits of different fruits.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is adequately promoted because staff maintain appropriate levels of supervision and minimise most identified hazards. For example, children are supervised to the toilets and staff monitor children's arrival by greeting them upon arrival. Older children also have their names ticked off a list to ensure that they are all accounted for. Children's safety is potentially compromised in the outdoor area because the garden is not adequately maintained. For example, there is insufficient treebark on the floor exposing the plastic covering, adjacent to the climbing frame.

Children have access to a good range of toys and equipment which promotes their development in most areas. They are safe and appropriate for children being cared for and are stored on low-level shelves to promote children's choice and independence.

Children's welfare is safeguarded, as staff have the necessary awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They are able to put necessary procedures into practice when required. However, some staff are unaware of procedures for allegations made against them, which means that children's welfare is potentially compromised. A policy is in place, but has not been updated to reflect recent guidance from the Local Safeguarding Board, which means staff and parents are not kept well informed of recent changes in the National Standards.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content within the group. They are greeted by staff who are enthusiastic and welcoming upon their arrival. Staff are fully aware of children's individual needs because they take time to find out about children's likes and dislikes. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan a range of interesting activities and play opportunities for younger children to promote their development.

Younger children have free access to a large hall, where they enjoy looking at books with staff and bathing dolls. They are developing small muscle skills as they dry their dolls and attempt to dress them with staff support. Children play well together, as they put the small world figures and furniture into the doll's house. They also enjoy role play activities as they get into the large 'cardboard box car' with their friends.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of children's starting points because they complete 'individual profiles' on children. They also have a good understanding and knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, which ensures that the education programme is effective. Staff indicate support for children in their planning who require more or less support, whereby ensuring that they make good progress in the six areas of learning. Regular observations are carried out on children's progress which is used to complete their assessments and inform future planning.

Children are confident and show positive attitudes towards learning, they are developing positive relationships with staff and their peers. They take pride when they are chosen as 'helpers' for the day and enjoy giving out stickers to the rest of the children. They reflect good skills in their independence as they help themselves to snacks and tidy up after themselves. Older children also demonstrate to younger ones how to use the 'snack table' when they join the pre-school group.

Children's language and communication skills are promoted skilfully by staff through activities such as story telling and discussions at registration time. They enjoy listening to their favourite stories, where by staff use props to tell the story. Children are learning to recognise their names through the use of phonics as they find their names upon their arrival. More able children can clearly write their names and also identify other children's name cards.

Children are showing interest in numerals which are displayed in their environment. Staff use routines to count, for example, children count all the children and adults in the room. More able children are able to solve simple problems which involve addition and subtraction. For example, children count staff in the room and work out how many there will be by adding and taking away staff in other areas. Children use scales to weigh and measure objects and to also sort them into colours and patterns. They learn about size as they measure the furniture in the room and use the height chart to see how much they have grown.

Children have free access to the computer and are able to use it independently. They are gaining increasing control in using the mouse to perform simple tasks. They are learning to take turns through the use of the 'traffic lights' timer system, whereby staff programme a limited time for children to use the computer.

Children are developing their creativity as they play with the shaving foam and look for bugs in the strawberry jelly where they use their senses such as smell and taste. They are learning about sounds and rhythm, as they enjoy making 'frog like' sounds using instruments. Children are developing their small muscle skills as they handle tools such as glue sticks, play dough tools, and small world equipment.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are valued and cared for according to their individual needs. They learn about diversity as they play with a good variety of toys and equipment which reflects equality of opportunity. Staff support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which enables them to take part in all activities in the group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn to take turns as they form a harmonious group. They follow the 'golden rules' because they have helped to devise them and understand the reasoning for them. As a result, children's behaviour is good. Older children take pride in helping younger ones, for example, assisting them with the computer.

The partnership between parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with regular information about the setting through the notice board and letters. They also exchange information about their children's progress with their key worker on a daily basis. All children have a weekly diary which is completed and parents are also encouraged to share information to promote children's well-being. However, parents of funded children are not fully included in children's learning at home. Staff commented that they are fully aware that this area needs to be developed.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are safe because all staff have been through a rigorous vetting procedure to ensure they are suitable to work with young children. The premises are well organised and space is used to its full potential to maximise children's play opportunities. Staff are deployed effectively, consequently this means children are supervised appropriately at all times. They benefit from a key worker system which ensures that their care is consistent.

All required documentation is in place to promote children's sense of well-being. However some policies require to be updated to reflect current legislation. An appraisal system is in place to assess staff's training and development needs.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. Staff demonstrate a real commitment to continually developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to good quality care. Staff are knowledgeable and keen to attend relevant training when such needs are identified through team meetings and supervisions. There are good systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery provision. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through regular meetings and daily discussions.

Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the childminder was asked to: continue to ensure that children have an appropriate range of resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and make the kitchen inaccessible to the children and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of child sized chairs. Children are learning about the wider world through a good range of resources which promote equality of opportunity. Their welfare is promoted because children have sufficient and appropriate equipment in the group. The kitchen area is now inaccessible which promotes children's safety.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since April 2004, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve opportunities for children to access large play equipment to develop their climbing and balancing skills (also Nursery Education).
- further develop the child protection policy to include procedures for allegations of abuse being made against a member of staff
- ensure the outdoor area is adequately maintained
- review the policies and procedures regularly to ensure they reflect changes in legislation.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve opportunities for parents to be involved in children's learning

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)