



St. Thomas's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217839
Inspection date	09 February 2006
Inspector	Valerie Thomas
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Registered person	Lisa Snow and Lisa Hopkin
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St.Thomas's Day Nursery was registered in 2002. It operates from three rooms in a detached, single storey building next to St.Thomas's church in Tean. A maximum of 49 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 17.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 79 children aged from 0 to 11 years on roll. Of these, 18 children

receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports children with special needs.

There are 14 full and part-time staff who work with the children, of these eight of the staff, including the two managers hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff who are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines. Children are always encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. They know that they need to wash their hands before eating their meals because they have germs on them and that germs make you poorly. This helps children take responsibility for keeping themselves healthy. Satisfactory procedures such as staff wearing protective clothing for nappy changing and for serving food sustain appropriate levels of hygiene. This helps reduce the risk of cross contamination. Clear procedures for sick and infectious children help prevent the spread of infection and keeps them healthy.

Children benefit from staff working in partnership with parents to meet their dietary needs. They obtain detailed individual routines for babies to ensure children eat and sleep according to their needs. Lunches are mainly healthy and nutritious with home-cooked meals. However, there are some processed foods each week and healthy options at the mid-morning snack and after the main meal are not always available, as children mainly have biscuits and cakes. Drinks are available at set times such as lunch and snack times, although they are not available throughout the day and children are not aware they can ask for one. This does not help children develop a positive attitude to healthy eating at all times.

Children enjoy many opportunities for physical exercise. They regularly play outside in the fresh air and older children walk to school on a daily basis. Children enjoy running around, playing ring games and climbing up on the slide. They have lots of fun trundling along on the sit and ride toys and learning to catch the ball. Indoors they enjoy climbing up and down on the soft play shapes and babies develop their mobility as staff help them to stand on their feet. These activities help children to develop their physical skills and encourage a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where most risks to children are limited through appropriate safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times and risk assessments are completed on a regular basis. Cloth covers on radiators and electrical sockets are checked daily to ensure they are not a hazard to children. There has been a problem with one of the fire exit doors not

opening due to inclement weather, however this was addressed on the second day of inspection. Fire evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff and are practised with the children. Children know they need to line up and go out of the door when they hear the bell. They then have to stand still outside and can go back in if there is no fire. This helps children take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

There is sufficient space within the setting to provide children with a range of activities and the outside area offers good space for them to play with a safety surface fitted. Children use a varied range of safe resources which are accessible to children in all rooms. Staff explain safe practices to children such as, not climbing on the toys or going too fast and high on the swings as they may fall. Safe procedures for children walking to school are implemented effectively. Children know they need to have a partner when they walk to school to help them stay safe and that they need to stop and wait for the staff to stand in the car park before they can go across. This helps children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and many staff have received training in child protection. They are clear on the relevant agencies to report their concerns to for most incidents and have a good understanding of signs and symptoms that may alert to child abuse. This helps protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident in the setting's welcoming and caring environment. Young babies receive cuddles and enjoy the positive interaction they receive from the staff. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home and staff are attentive to their needs for most of the time. However, they sometimes leave the babies in the 'entertainment' centre at the side of the room, with little interaction from staff, while they complete tasks such as getting other children to sleep. Importance is placed on providing varied sensory play for all children. Young babies show good interest as they explore the bottles in the treasure basket looking at the liquid and glitter in the bottle and how it moves. Babies lie on the mat reaching out and vocalising to the shapes and staff encourage the children to explore the toys as they hold them. Samples of children's pictures show that they have taken part in finger painting and used their feet to make prints. At singing time babies watch staff as they sing and clap their hands to the songs and they try to imitate the actions. However, some of the songs are not age appropriate and too detailed for babies and children lose interest.

Older children have positive relationships with staff and receive comfort and attention when they need support. Most children play happily together and with adults, using resources such as colouring and the farm animals. They sit and concentrate well as they colour and draw their pictures. Children's language and communication skills are promoted well by staff through encouraging the children to learn animal sounds and some are able to copy noises such as 'cock-a-doodle-do'. They have lots of fun playing on the trucks outside, riding the push a longs and throwing the balls. There is a good range of resources throughout the nursery which, are organised well in all

rooms. However, in the 'tweenie' room children are not always able to choose an alternative activity. Some children are not always interested in what is set out and staff do not encourage them to become involved in anything else. Planning for this age group is sometimes inappropriate and expectations are set too high. For example, planning for children aged 18 months details activities such as learning and recognising shapes and is not linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Planning for school children is in place, but they are encouraged to make their own choices. Children say that they like to play with the play dough and take part in various games. Children enjoy playing 'Chinese whispers' as they wait to go to school in the morning. Children sit and concentrate well as they try to listen and pass the correct sentence to their friends. They enjoy listening to what the final sentence is. Children play well and have good relationships with each other.

There are systems in place for recording children's progress although they are currently being changed to reflect the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff make regular observations of activities that children take part in and individual targets are set for each child. This helps to ensure children achieve their potential.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a suitable understanding of how young children learn and progress. Planning contains sufficient detail to allow all staff to deliver the programme and links clearly to the stepping stones. However, it does not differentiate for the differing abilities of children and there are areas in knowledge and understanding of the world that are not covered. Staff use appropriate methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with children, asking questions and extending their play during most activities. Staff help raise children's awareness of the community and the wider world well. Although there are no children currently attending with special educational needs, staff knowledge of the Code of Practice is limited and therefore they would not be able to provide appropriate support if needed.

Challenges for children are satisfactory although, in areas of mathematics and literacy they are insufficient in some areas. Assessment and evaluation of children's achievements during activities takes place through regular observations and samples of children's work are kept to show how they have progressed. However, their achievements are not assessed against the full range of stepping stones to identify if there are any gaps in children's learning and staff are not fully clear of the stage children are at. Behaviour is managed well by staff and clear boundaries are set. The room is organised appropriately and offers a stimulating environment for most areas of learning, although the area where books are available is not inviting to encourage children to use it.

Children are interested in activities and most show good concentration as they sit and learn shapes and letters on the flash cards at registration time and sit well for the story about 'Bambi' after lunch. Children behave well responding positively to the boundaries set and enjoy the praise they receive when they count the numbers and paint their pictures. They play well together in the home corner and as they work together to make the two-seater swing go faster and higher. They manage their self-care well as they go to the toilet and put on their coats. However, they are not

encouraged to develop their independence further for example, by pouring their own drinks at snack time. Children's language skills are good. They speak clearly and confidently, expressing their needs and enjoy conversation with each other at snack time. They learn new words such as 'hibernation' and 'antlers' as they listen to stories. Children handle books well as they sit and look at them after lunch but do not attempt to look at them at other times. Children recognise letters as they look at flash cards at registration time and know that 'd' is dog and 'b' is for 'bouncy Ben'. Most children recognise their name on the cards as they wait to go and wash their hands for snack. Samples of children's work displayed show that their writing skills are developing well. However, older children are not encouraged to label their own pictures and there are limited opportunities for children to use writing as a way of communicating.

Children understand and use numbers well. They count up to ten confidently and older children can count up to 20. They are able to match number to object well as they count how many flash cards they have and how many apples are on the jigsaw. They recognise numbers on the flash cards and older children know that 6 comes after 5 and 9 comes after 8. However, they do not often develop problem solving skills through practical activities and routines, such as finding out how many more bears are needed to make the set and how many chairs are needed for children at the table. Children demonstrate that they understand size and shape well. They know which bears are big and little and older children can find the medium sized bears with ease. They are able to name and recognise a wide range of shapes including three dimensional ones such as rhomboid and pyramid. Children develop their exploration and investigation skills as they learn about change when growing sunflowers and making jelly. They remembered that they planted the seeds and watered them to make them grow into flowers and that they mixed the 'jelly lumps' with water and then put it in the fridge before they could eat it. They enjoy building with construction sets but do not have many opportunities to make three dimensional objects with recyclable materials or to try out different joining techniques. Children are confident to use the computer and know that they need to move and click the mouse to make the arrow move on the screen and to activate the pictures.

Good use of the indoor and outdoor area helps children to develop all of their physical skills well. They use one-handed tools competently as they paint their pictures and work sheets displayed show that they are learning to write with control. Children are confident as they use the climbing equipment outside, climbing up, crawling through the hole and sliding down with ease. They have lots of fun jumping on the trampoline together and are competent as they use their arms and legs to make the swings go higher. They are able to express themselves freely through painting and enjoy exploring many different textures such as, clay, dough and pasta. Children use their imagination well as they play in the home-corner. For example, they use covers to make a tent over the stools and table so that they can 'hide from the monsters'. Planning shows that children take part in drama sessions where they act out stories such as, 'The three little pigs' and 'Goldilocks'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy positive relationships with each other and with staff. All children are valued and respected as individuals and their confidence and self-esteem is developed well with use of praise and encouragement during their play for most of the day. There is a varied range of resources to promote positive images of different cultures, gender and disability. Children have been for walks to the local school to watch the nativity concerts and various festivals such as the Chinese New Year, are celebrated. This helps them to develop their knowledge of the wider world and raise their awareness of diversity. The setting's policies promote inclusion for all children and good support is provided for children with special needs.

Most children behave well and respond positively to boundaries set by staff. Methods used are satisfactory as staff talk to children and ask them not to do things. For example, they ask them not to stand on the bench or climb on top of the farm. However, there has been one occasion where the method used was inappropriate as other methods such as distraction and talking to the child on a one to one basis had failed. Children take turns and share, help each other to tidy away and use their manners well. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Parents are made aware of how the setting operates through discussion of all policies and procedures. There is a satisfactory procedure for recording complaints from parents. Children's individual needs and routines are discussed and recorded in detail with parents. This helps children to settle quickly and helps the transition from home to nursery care. Younger children have a daily diary which is used to keep parents informed of their child's well-being, while discussion is used for parents of older children.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Written information on the educational programme is available on the parent's notice board within the room, although not all parents are aware of this. Letters are sent home for some of the topics to ask parents to bring objects in linked to the theme. Open evenings and discussion of the targets set for children keep parents informed of their child's progress. This enables parents to be involved in their own child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are satisfactory recruitment procedures which help to ensure staff are appropriately vetted and there is a suitable level of qualified staff who work with the children. Most required documentation is in place and all records are stored confidentially. However, attendance records for children and staff do not always include the times of arrival and departure on some occasions. There is a training programme implemented for staff and many training courses have been attended. For example, risk assessment, child protection and working with the under threes. This helps to broaden children's experiences and keep staff updated on childcare

issues. Induction procedures for new staff are satisfactory and help them to understand their roles and the procedures to be implemented. The setting is organised appropriately to meet children's needs. Children are in age appropriate group rooms and resources are accessible. They are welcoming to children and routines implemented help children feel secure. The large play area outside offers challenge for children and the colourful safety surface ensures it is welcoming and safe for children to play.

The leadership and management of nursery education are satisfactory. Regular staff meetings are held and monitoring of the planning and teaching practices takes place. However, this has not identified that there are gaps in children's learning opportunities. The nursery does seek the views of parents through regular questionnaires and advice is sought from an early years advisor. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the nursery should improve the range of activities planned for children under two years, provide a key worker system throughout the nursery and provide written risk assessments for nappy changing.

Planning of activities for babies has been improved and a broad range is now provided. This ensures all staff are aware of what to set out for children on a daily basis as they follow the two week rota. Activities include musical toys, the ball pool and the 'treasure basket', which all help to develop children's sensory skills. As a result children's interest is maintained for most of the time. A key worker system is implemented for all children. This is used to help new children settle, record their progress and liaise with parents. A visit has taken place by the Health and Safety Department and assessed that the nappy changing units are safe to use. The nursery has drawn up a checklist to ensure it is checked on a daily basis. This helps to ensure children's safety.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has very recently received one complaint since the last inspection relating to National Standard 11: Behaviour and National Standard 7: Health. The complaint related to the use of discipline and the recording of accidents. Ofsted carried out an investigation as part of this inspection. From the evidence gathered it was evident that inappropriate methods have been used to manage behaviour on one occasion. This was in agreement with parents and has been recorded accordingly. The records for recording accidents were viewed and discussed and from this we found that on some occasions parents are asked to sign past records to acknowledge the entry, although they have been informed verbally. The provider has addressed this issue with staff as part of a staff meeting. As a result of the investigation, an action has been set in relation to developing staff's knowledge and understanding of appropriate behaviour management methods. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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.

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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):

- develop a suitable range of activities for children in the 'tweenie room' as explained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and ensure that all children under three are stimulated appropriately
- ensure records of children's and staff attendance are accurately recorded at all times
- ensure that meals and snacks given to children offer more healthy and nutritious options and that drinks are available at all times

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):

- develop further the system for recording assessment and planning to ensure it shows clearly how children are progressing towards the stepping stones and that planning is differentiated for the different abilities of children
- plan more effectively to ensure practical activities are used to help children develop problem solving skills and ensure they have regular opportunities to construct and join materials together using a range of tools and techniques
- provide increased opportunities for children to use writing as a way of communicating and for a purpose and ensure the area for children to sit and read books is made welcoming and encourages children to use it
- encourage children to further develop their self-help skills as part of snack and meal times
- develop staff's understanding of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and ensure there is an effective system in place to offer appropriate

support.

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