

St Thomas More Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127631
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Inspector Beryl Witheridge

Setting address The Priest's House, The Hermitage, More Park, West
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

St Thomas More Pre-school opened in 1990 and operates from three rooms and an office. It is situated in the village of West Malling, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.12.00 and 12.00 to 3.00 every day with a lunch club for the older children for 39 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 47 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Children receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Of these seven staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff working towards a further qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting promotes the unique needs of each child and supports their welfare and learning. Children explore within safe boundaries and enjoy being with staff and each other. All the required documentation is in place however the register is not always completed accurately and the fire drill is not practised often enough to ensure all children know what to do. The partnerships between the setting, parents and other agencies are very well established and help to provide continuity of care and to ensure that the learning needs of the children are being met. The setting has identified areas for improvement within their provision. The ongoing aims of the setting help to promote the outcomes for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- practise the emergency evacuation routine regularly so that all children know how to protect themselves in an emergency
- ensure that the register of attendance is completed correctly with the hours of attendance for each child

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through the setting's clear and robust policies, strategies and procedures that help to promote their welfare at all times. Staff have an up-to-date understanding of child protection issues, know where to access important information and know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. Practises are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and continue to put children's welfare first. Systems for recruitment and vetting are rigorous and help to ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so and ensure that they know their individual roles and responsibilities. Ongoing monitoring of staff performance through appraisals and regular staff meetings helps to promote children's welfare effectively. Risk assessment is clear and well documented, covers all areas of the setting and daily checks help to identify and minimise the risk of accidental injury to children. All the required documentation is in place; the register is completed daily but does not record the hours of attendance for the children. Fire drills are carried out once a term but this is not often enough to ensure that all children have been included and know what to do in the event of an emergency.

The setting is fully committed towards continuous improvement. They are clearly evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and staff are able to talk about the areas they want to develop and where they feel they are doing well. Development plans are in place and improvements are ongoing. This helps to promote the outcomes for children. The previous recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed, helping to improve practice for the children attending. The deployment of toys, resources and experiences are good given the limitations of the premises; the addition of a photographic folder of all resources enables children to make independent choices.

Equality and diversity is embedded into every day practice. Staff monitor their practices to ensure the needs of all children are supported. Children have plenty of opportunities to learn about diversity in society and the needs and wishes of all children, including those with special educational needs and speaking English as an additional language. The needs of all children and their families are fully addressed. All experiences and activities are available to all children, providing them with opportunities to learn and develop.

Good partnership working supports the needs of individual children and their families. For example, the setting works with other agencies and professionals who are involved in the care of the children and their families. There are established links with other settings providing the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as the local school. Effective liaison helps to offer children continuity of care and learning.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Children benefit from effective partnership working between the staff and their parents. Parents receive their own copy of the policies and procedures as part of their parent pack when their child first starts. Staff work very closely with parents and share a range of information about their child with them. They meet with them three times a year to look at the

children's learning journey and parents have meaningful input into their child's future learning. Parents feel their children are well cared for by staff who know them well. They are happy with their children's progress and feel that any concerns are dealt with swiftly. Parent's views are undertaken as part of the ongoing self-evaluation process and ideas for improvement are taken on board and added to the development plans. Parents work in the setting on a rota system so they are able to see and understand at first hand what the children are doing, why and how this helps to promote children's learning and development.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children show they feel safe within the setting. They are happy, settled and secure because staff provide close care, are attentive and respond swiftly to their needs. They sit with the children either on the floor or at the table. They listen to and interact with the children to help them develop their thinking skills, creatively and analytically. Staff are developing the environment to one where all children are active independent learners. They provide resources which encourage children to explore and experiment. Staff are working to help children develop their thinking and concentration skills. Staff provide cuddles and hugs as they help children who have just started to attend to settle. Children gain confidence, independence and the acquisition of language skills. Starting points are clearly recorded and cover all areas of learning. Individual needs and interests are identified and continually recorded to ensure that they are included in the future planning. Information from observation and assessment is used very effectively when planning activities. Children's learning journeys clearly show their progress and development through all areas of learning.

The resources are organised into accessible and attractive areas. Children have free flow play between the three rooms. Staff ensure there is always someone there to support their play, language and interests. Children are able to make decisions about what they want to play with, as well as taking part in some adult led activities. Children are able to freely access the computer; they are able to decide which programme they want to use and show extremely good understanding and amazing mouse skills. Children enjoy singing and dancing; they accompany their singing with recorded music and musical instruments. Children play well together they collaborate in their play, they share and take turns well.

Children love to play outside in the newly developed outdoor area. They are able to make decisions about what they want to play with and can freely access to the equipment from the shed. The sand pit with the mechanical digger is a favourite. Children climb on the climbing frame and swing from it pretending to be monkeys accompanied by very effective vocal impressions. They play football and basketball and love catching the plastic ducks in the water play. Staff introduce number, reasoning and problem solving easily into their games as well as helping them to improve their language and understanding.

Children have access to a wide natural world all around them. They plant and grow

vegetables in their raised gardening beds. They have ducks and fish in the pond next to their play area, which is securely sectioned off. They are able to see the horses in the neighbouring field and are surrounded by many differing types of trees and bushes. Children learn about diversity through the other families who attend; they share information about their culture, background and language. They have trips out, visitors to the setting such as the local community policeman and take part in activities with the local school. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is being developed in many ways.

Children are introduced to healthy food options through their activities with growing as well as snack times. They are offered choices of different fruits, they are able to decide for themselves then cut their own food such as apples, bananas, oranges and cucumber with a proper knife, closely supervised by a member of staff. They pour their own drinks and wash their plate, cup and knife afterwards. Children who have a packed lunch sit and eat well together. Parents are advised about providing a balanced diets for their children and how to store the food correctly. Any specific dietary requests or needs are noted so that all staff or volunteers are aware. Children learn about good hygiene routines and are very independent.

Effective behaviour management procedures ensure that children are learning to develop responsibility for their actions. They play cooperatively together and respond well to praise and encouragement. This gives them the incentive to do well as they develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff are good role models to the children; they are always polite and encourage the children in all they do. Overall, an inclusive and welcoming service is provided.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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