

St Thomas Children's Centre

St Thomas Children Centre, Bell Barn Road, Birmingham, B15 2AF

Inspection date	21/03/2013
Previous inspection date	12/06/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- All children's individual learning needs are exceptionally well met, as staff observe and assess them, in order to plan sharply focused next steps in their learning. This means that they make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Children experience a wealth of exciting and challenging activities and develop their own learning styles in stimulating, enabling environments. This means that they consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning.
- The highest priority is given to children's well-being and feelings of security. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers ensure that children have consistency of care and are learning about healthy eating and how to look after themselves.
- Self-evaluation is highly effective in identifying and addressing areas for improvement. It takes account of the views of parents and children, so that children continue to receive high quality learning experiences.
- Partnerships with other professionals and early years providers are exceptionally strong, which means that children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main playroom and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector held meetings with the locality manager for the provision and the head teacher of the nursery school.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, the self-evaluation form, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting and a range of documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents and carers and children spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Catherine Sharkey

Full Report

Information about the setting

St Thomas Children's Centre was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated near Birmingham city centre and is managed by the local authority. The childcare provision operates from the Willow Room within the children's centre. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It opens on Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm, all year round with the exception of bank holidays. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The childcare provision employs three members of childcare staff, all of whom, hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds a Foundation Degree in Early Years and another holds an early years degree. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 25 children attending, who are within the early years age group. The childcare provision supports a number of children, who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop parents' confidence to support their children's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The staff in the childcare room work as a strong team to plan a wealth of exciting and challenging activities, which are extremely well adapted to meet the needs of each child. They make very detailed observations on children during their activities, which they use to record and assess their progress. Children's progress is measured against what they can do when they start at the childcare provision. This information is obtained through detailed discussions with parents and carers and recorded in an 'All About Me' booklet. Children are assessed by staff once they are settled in and their sharply focused next steps in learning are planned as a result of this. Staff track each child's progress and development highly effectively and use their comprehensive knowledge of the child and their family to secure timely interventions and support. All those involved in the child's learning contribute to precise assessments, so that a complete picture of their progress is obtained. Children make rapid progress in their learning and development as staff have a clear understanding of how children learn and have an expert knowledge of the delivery of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Activities are planned

around individual children's interests and needs and take account of which sessions they attend, so that they all receive equally rich and varied learning experiences.

Staff ensure that parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning, as they speak to them each day and keep them very well informed about their activities and progress. They are provided with comprehensive information about their children's learning and development and how they learn from their play. Parents attend regular 'stay and play' sessions with their children and are encouraged to read stories, either in English or in their home language. They take books home to look at with children. This provides a link with home and widens children's experience of other cultures within the community. Parents are advised by staff on how they can support and enhance their children's learning at home, as they are enthusiastic about this. Staff build parents' confidence through the story telling sessions and parents are invited to share other skills with the children in family workshops, such as pottery or jewellery making. Staff are keen to develop this further, so that more parents become involved. Parents join in with a great deal of their children's learning, as professional musicians, an African drummer, potters, dancers and actors all visit the centre regularly. This engages children and their families in these activities, which fires their enthusiasm and imaginations, so that they extend this learning further. For example, by visits to theatres or workshops at other venues. This means that children have an exceptionally broad range of exciting experiences from which they learn many valuable skills and express themselves creatively and imaginatively.

Babies enjoy exploring a wide range of textured objects in treasure baskets. They sit or roll around on cosy mats and cushions and are encouraged to reach for the toys they like, so that they develop their physical skills very well. They listen to the sounds that are produced when they shake bells or other percussion instruments, which they choose from the huge range available in an inviting music corner. Toddlers enjoy playing outside and exploring the garden or using their imaginations with the dolls and pushchairs. They learn about living things as they look at the newly hatched chicks in the children's centre and grow flowers and strawberries in the summer. Staff encourage children to notice features of their environment as they talk about the construction site over the road, which they visit, or to look at the clouds. They are asked if the clouds are higher than the buildings, which is one of many ways used to develop very young children's mathematical thinking effectively. Children's sentences are extended very well as a two-year-old child says 'that's the window.' A member of staff replies, 'yes and this is the door,' as she points to it. Children's vocabulary is developed very well and they make very rapid progress in their communication and language skills, which are given extremely high priority.

Parents are involved in an extensive range of activities, which reflect children's diverse cultures. They accompany staff and children on a trip to the Chinese market at Chinese New Year. They encourage children to listen to the sounds, see the colours and taste different foods. Children make a dragon and dance to Chinese music. Parents work together to write a poem about their experiences, which they read to children. This means that children are thinking about their senses and noticing the world around them. Parents share cultural information, so that Diwali and other celebrations are enhanced and extended for children. All children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning through the highly skilled teaching by staff, who ensure that each child

makes rapid and continuous progress in their learning and development.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The utmost priority is given to ensuring that all children are settled and feel completely secure in the childcare provision. Key persons work closely with parents and families to achieve this and parents or other close family members may stay with children until they are happy to be left in the care of staff. Babies and toddlers show that they are happy and secure as they laugh and clap when they join in with action songs together. They enjoy including staff in their play and babies are happy to sleep in a cot in a quiet area where they are checked easily, as this area is part of the main room.

Staff work very closely with children's families and support services so that children's health and welfare is supported exceptionally well. This means that they make excellent progress in their learning and development as their health and emotional security is protected through excellent links with other professionals and children's families. Parents are secure in the knowledge that they can speak to staff each day and receive advice on how best to support their children, so that they receive consistency and continuity in their care. Children's transition to the nursery school in the children's centre, or to other settings, is eased considerably, as they make visits with their key person, so that they become familiar with the staff and the new environment. This is planned very carefully to meet the needs of each child. Information about their needs and progress is shared between the settings, so that these needs continue to be fully met.

Children are provided with healthy snacks at the childcare provision. Parents attend enjoyable cooking sessions at the children's centre, so that they learn how to cook nutritious, low salt and low sugar based foods for children. This ensures that they promote a healthy lifestyle and children are making healthy food choices. It also cements links and support for families, which has positive effects on children's well-being and security. Children benefit from regular fresh air and exercise through their trips to local parks and their play in the garden. They learn to manage risks safely as they negotiate the wide range of climbing and balancing equipment at the park and at the childcare provision. Behaviour is very good indeed and staff encourage children to share the toys and work together to tidy up, which they do. They are praised frequently for their good manners and achievements, which builds their confidence and gives them good self-esteem. Children are learning to be independent, as they put on their own coats and manage their cutlery and tools very well.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff in the childcare provision are exceptionally well supported by the children's centre senior staff, in order to monitor the impact of their teaching and planning, so that children continue to receive consistently high quality learning experiences. Regular appraisals and supervisions ensure that areas for improvement in practice and other aspects of the

provision are quickly identified and precisely targeted, in order to maintain the highest levels of achievement for all children. Staff are exceptionally highly motivated and attend regular, focused training courses, as a result of their appraisals and assessments.

There is very strong teamwork between all the childcare staff and with other professionals and staff at the linked children's centres. This results in highly successful and well documented self-evaluation processes that identify and target specific areas for improvement, which maintains the already high standards in the childcare provision. The views of parents and children are included in the self-evaluation process, as there is very effective communication and they are all confident in making suggestions that they feel would enhance the provision. For example, parents ask if the children could take part in more activities to improve their physical development, so this has been successfully addressed. Very young children's views are obtained through their key person's observations and discussion with parents to find out what they enjoy most and how this can be developed.

All staff have an excellent understanding of child protection through regular training and monitoring and they implement the robust policies and practice extremely effectively. The strong links with other professionals and support services means that children are exceptionally well protected and any concerns are recorded and closely monitored, so that children are safeguarded. The premises are particularly secure, as all visitors enter through the main reception area for the building and staff can see who is at the locked, safety glass door to the room. Regular fire drills and highly effective risk assessments for the premises and for all outings ensure that children are safe. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

Excellent partnerships with the other local children's centres, health visitors, social services and many other professionals means that all children and their families are supported exceptionally well, so that they learn and develop in a safe and secure environment. Close links with the nursery school in the centre and with other early years providers enable staff to share ideas and best practice on a regular basis, which helps them to monitor their practice and maintain high standards. The effective links with musicians and a wide variety of artists considerably enhances children's learning experiences and enjoyment of their time at the childcare provision and involves their families and other members of the community, so that they are all working together to support children in their learning and development.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY362555
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	821053
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	25
Name of provider	The St Thomas Children's Centre Management Board
Date of previous inspection	12/06/2008
Telephone number	0121 4642173

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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