

Inspection of St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery

3 Tutts Barn Lane, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 8XT

Inspection date: 4 September 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children gain tremendous benefit from spending time in this exceptionally well-run and welcoming setting. Leaders and staff very successfully create an environment where each child's physical and emotional well-being is prioritised and expertly nurtured. The calm, consistent and very caring approach of staff supports children to understand and manage their emotions, and they learn to behave well.

With the support of staff, children become highly motivated and independent learners. All children receive the encouragement and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. They enthusiastically take part in the broad range of activities provided and confidently use knowledge they have gained over time. For example, older children who have spent a lot of time in the setting's allotment patiently show their new friends how to fill a variety of bird feeders. They concentrate intently as they carefully pour the right amount and explain how the birds reach through the holes to eat the seeds. Children's fascination with nature is further enhanced as they follow the suggestion of staff to explore underneath the leaves of the rhubarb plants they have grown. The discovery of a caterpillar creates excitement, and children eagerly gather to have a close look. However, they quickly remember previous advice not to touch the 'ones with prickles'.

Younger children relish learning through discovery and trial and error. They show very mature levels of focus, undaunted when their first attempts are unsuccessful. For example, children use their rapidly developing problem-solving skills to create impressive constructions. They also work together to construct complex assault courses. Staff understand the importance of enabling children to test their own physical capabilities and to learn to assess and manage risks independently.

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

- The leadership and management of the setting is inspiring. All working practices and procedures are carefully designed and implemented to offer the best possible standard of care and education. Senior leaders are fully supportive of the manager and staff team. Staff regularly complete relevant training that continually enhances their individual skills and knowledge. They share their learning with their colleagues, leading to the introduction of effective new systems and techniques that are fully understood and embraced by all staff.
- Managers and staff create a curriculum that is superbly planned to respond to the immediate and evolving needs of the children attending. Staff go to exceptional lengths to get to know children and their families. This enables them to identify precisely what each child needs to learn next. All staff expertly target their interactions to suit each child's preferred learning style. They very successfully sequence learning so that children have ample time to reflect and

process new ideas, and to practise and master new skills.

- There are exceptionally effective arrangements to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All staff are fully aware of children's individual personalities and abilities. They are consistent in using agreed approaches. For example, all staff immediately recognise when a child needs a few moments to 'reset' and know precisely how to accommodate this.
- Staff place a strong focus on promoting children's communication and language and do this incredibly well. For example, they identify key vocabulary to introduce during activities. All staff are consistent in using these words and giving context to help children to fully understand what they mean. Throughout the setting, children confidently and excitedly use their developing language to share their ideas and engage in animated conversations.
- Staff provide excellent support for children learning English as an additional language to develop their spoken English. In addition, they provide story books in every one of the vast range of languages children use and hear at home. Staff recognise that this not only supports children's all round language development, but also promotes their positive sense of self-identify.
- Children develop excellent social skills as a result of the highly effective teaching and support they receive from staff. In addition, children learn to understand and respect diversity. This prepares them well for their future lives as learners, friends, colleagues and neighbours. For example, staff plan their calendar to include activities to teach children about the many special days and events celebrated by each family.
- The curriculum for expressive arts and design is a particular strength in the setting. Staff provide children with constant access to a broad and exciting range of art and craft resources. Children of all ages become fully absorbed in pouring and mixing paint colours, exploring the properties of glue and using tools to make marks. Staff teach children specific techniques but are passionate about encouraging them to explore their own ideas. This results in children boldly creating wonderfully unique and expressive artwork.
- Leaders and staff recognise that children learn best when they are emotionally secure. They go above and beyond expectations of their roles to work with parents to achieve this. The time, emotional support and practical help that managers and staff dedicate to helping individual families have a significant impact on outcomes for children. In addition, leaders use their comprehensive knowledge of local services to link parents to professionals and agencies who can provide targeted support. Parents' feedback is extremely positive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	507912
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10351053
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP519732
Telephone number	01323 725977
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018

Information about this early years setting

St Thomas-a-Becket Nursery registered in 1999. It is located in the grounds of St Thomas-a-Becket Infant School, in the town of Eastbourne, East Sussex. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 3pm, term time only. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years old. The nursery employs 10 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications between level 3 and level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Liz Caluori

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk and discussed the intent behind the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interaction between staff and children during a range of activities, indoors and outside.
- The manager and inspector conducted a joint observation of an activity and assessed the effectiveness of the planning and implementation.
- The views of staff, children and parents were gathered and taken into account.
- A selection of relevant paperwork was viewed.

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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