

# St. Thomas R.C.Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Chapel Street  
Keith  
AB55 5AL

Telephone: 01542 882256

**Type of inspection:**

Unannounced

**Completed on:**

18 June 2018

**Service provided by:**

The Moray Council

**Service provider number:**

SP2003001892

**Service no:**

CS2003016013

## About the service

St. Thomas R.C. Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time aged two years to those not attending primary school. The service was previously registered and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service operates from a room at the rear of the school building. It has its own entrance and a small secure courtyard play area is easily accessed from the playroom. The service also has use of the school playing field, gym hall and library.

The aims and objectives of the service include:

- to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children can develop at their own pace
- to encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment
- independence and self-discipline are promoted at all times through the support and positive encouragement of the nursery staff
- we aim to enable all children to achieve their full potential.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC, safe, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included (also known as SHANARRI).

## What people told us

There was a total of 17 children present during the inspection; they appeared assured, happy and confident. We observed the children were able to choose what they wanted to do, some enjoyed creative play, others imaginary play. Most of the children chose to spend the majority of their time playing outside. They were able to explore and be creative, baking in the mud kitchen, digging and burying in the sand and painting various objects. More active play took place on the playing field, along with loose parts play. Specific comments included:

- 'I can do cartwheels'
- 'nursery is fun, I see my friends'
- 'we have made rainbow playdough'
- 'I have found a ladybird and can count the spots'
- 'I can balance, you hold your arms out to keep you steady'
- 'I like making mud pies'
- 'this is a fire hose (ribbed tubing) we have to put the fire out'.

Five parents returned completed Care Standards Questionnaires. We spoke with four parents face-to-face. They all told us that overall they were very happy with everything, staff were very approachable and knew their child well. Communication and information sharing was good and helped them to feel involved in their child's learning and progress. Specific comments included:

- 'very good at recognising and supporting individual needs and skills, all staff kind, friendly, attentive and fair'
- 'staff at St. Thomas nursery have created a safe, friendly, fun environment, we are very happy when our child tells us all they have been learning, I trust staff 100%'
- 'all nursery staff are great, nothing seems too much for them; they are always on hand to help if I need it'

'really happy, staff are great and provide great experiences for the children'  
'a lovely service with friendly staff that really care about the children and know them so well'.

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance processes. These demonstrated their priorities for development.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

Children experienced a vibrant, receptive and nurturing environment that resulted in smiles and laughter. Children were able to make choices about their play which captured their interest through investigation and exploration, whilst taking account of their needs and abilities. Group activities enabled children to talk together, listen and share their ideas. Children were being encouraged to have an understanding of emotions, to share and develop a sense of fairness.

Children's contributions were clearly valued and respected with self directed play. Their ideas and views were being sought and recorded through big books (encourage thinking skills through talking together in a group). Staff used conversations and play situations to encourage deeper involvement and challenge that helped children to work out their own theories through open questions, such as what if.....

Children experienced sensitive and responsive care, helping to build their confidence, resilience and self esteem. Parents told us that the friendly and courteous approach of the staff helped, was lovely, and that they had seen a difference in their child's confidence as a result. Staff had got to know the children very well; they liaised closely with families, and other agency professionals, aligning with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. We noted that additional staff had been deployed where assessed as being appropriate so that meaningful support was provided. We suggested information related to the personal care plan should be well arranged and include known strategies, so that it helped to provide an accurate and current reflection of the child's needs that contributed to responsive care.

A child protection policy was in place. Staff had sound knowledge of child protection procedures through annual awareness training, so that children were safeguarded.

Children's physical and emotional and social wellbeing were being promoted during healthy snack, learning about healthy foods/eating, outdoor play and learning. Snacks and meals incorporated healthy foods and they complied with children's dietary needs and food preference, as identified by parents. Children were involved in preparing and delivering the snack which supported independence and learning about good nutrition.

Documentation was in place for the administration of medication, supporting children's wellbeing, although we discussed making some amendments as they were more suited to school age children.

Reference: management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services - [hub.careinspectorate.com](http://hub.careinspectorate.com)

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

Windows within the playroom provided natural light; the inviting space was brightened by colourful wall displays. The service was clean and free from faults and hazards; risk management procedures helped to identify known risks and any appropriate action needed to eliminate or minimise. Children were involved in making decisions about their own wellbeing and development through exploration and learning about risk, particularly, during outdoor play. It was anticipated that further value would be added through the extension of loose parts such as building materials/real life tools and forest school activities such as a fire pit.

The play room had been planned with space in mind so that children could move around freely and independently, choosing from creative and expressive play. Children had made play dough but chose for it to be rainbow and decided coloured beads would be added. A well equipped story corner/quiet space had also been used for interactive story telling. A blank space had enabled children to create a shop and they had sourced various things to sell. Staff anticipated that the sharing of good practice resource: our creative journey with a focus on expressive arts, would be used to further inspire children's experiences. We would encourage staff to include the children in the evaluation of the environment, responding to children's interests in a flexible way as they test out possibilities.

Children's health was further promoted as there was always access to a trained first aider, ensuring that children were treated properly should an accident occur. Infection control procedures took account of good practice guidance. For example, all children were learning about the importance of personal hygiene and how to keep healthy as they washed their hands after using the toilet, before having their snack and after blowing their nose.

Children chose to play outside for much of the session during free flow (indoor/outdoor) play which was beneficial to their physical, social and emotional strength and skills. Children baked in the mud kitchen, painted wooden blocks and dissolved chalk in water to discover what happened. On the playing field, children balanced on raised stepping stones, climbed on the activity frame, created a fire hose from ribbed tubing and relaxed/hid in a blanket den. Staff would continue to regenerate outdoor play so that it was equipped with real life and scrap materials to benefit psychological wellbeing.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

Staff were very friendly and welcoming towards the children, creating an environment where children were happy and assured. The awareness and understanding of qualified and experienced staff enabled them to support children in a meaningful way with the aim of helping them to achieve their full potential. Staff were well motivated and their natural enthusiasm, caring and professional approach, made a real difference to the children's learning and development.

Staff told us that they felt valued and well supported by the head teacher and that they were able to influence the service and use their initiative. Formal meetings between the head teacher and staff provided a conduit for sharing and reflection of practice, and discussing individual and continuous professional development (CPD). Staff were self aware, they were keen to find out what they didn't know and to improve their own skills and knowledge through the attainment of an additional early years qualification.

Staff worked very well together and knew when to step back and allow children to find things out for themselves but also used questions to extend their learning. We noted a child showed an interest in choosing different colours of paint - a staff member encouraged them to think about the colours they wanted and what needed to be mixed. Children also benefited from the use of kind words used in a calm and unhurried manner so they had time to absorb information.

Parents told us that they were very happy with the friendly approach of each staff member; their knowledge and relationship with their child(ren) created an interesting and fun learning environment for their child.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

## Findings from the inspection

The head teacher and staff recognised the benefits of engaging parents/carers and children in the day-to-day life of the nursery, seeking their views and ideas about improvement. There was an open and welcoming ethos that supported family involvement; conversations took place with parents at the beginning and end of the session. Parents told us that they were kept well informed through newsletters and a notice board that included a focus on improvement. Children were able to influence the service and be involved in decision-making through floor books, reflective conversations and acknowledgement of individual interests. There was also recognition of the benefits of involving children in the day to day life of the school, for example, children attended assembly with their individual achievements being recognised through an award and close liaison with the primary 1 class.

The head teacher visited the nursery regularly helping them to know children and families well and to have an overview of the strengths of the service. They provided effective leadership and direction to staff. Staff views were given status which led to better reflection and open debate about improvement. There were informal and formal opportunities for staff to discuss their practice and any pertinent issues, so where identified, adjustments could be made to make things better. Whilst formal meetings had a minute, we suggested that a standard agenda with the inclusion of responsive planning and improvement would be beneficial for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

Following a discussion regarding improvement, there was a consensus that quality assurance and self evaluation would remain continuous, with a focus on what was working well and what more could be done to improve outcomes for children. The framework 'How good is our early learning and childcare' would be used more effectively to explore progress, development and practice to help identify what has worked well and what needs to improve.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

### Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

### Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
14 Sep 2017	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>3 - Adequate</div>
11 Feb 2015	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>
20 Mar 2012	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>

Date	Type	Gradings	
30 Jun 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good



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