

# Sythwood School and Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Joanna Scott

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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

Sythwood School and Childrens Centre opened in 2008 and re-registered in 2009. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 56 children from two to five years at any one time, 12 of whom may be under three years. The nursery, school and Children's Centre operate integrated services, and at times older children under twelve years from this school and other schools in the community are present during out of school periods. During the term of inspection two year olds are not present at times when children over five years are cared for. There are currently 72 children on roll, of whom three are two year olds. The nursery provision operates from a purpose built room and children have direct access to a secure outdoor play area. Staff and children sometimes use other areas of the buildings on site including the hall, music room, computer suite, library and outdoor areas. Nursery opening hours are between 7.45am and 6pm, and in the term of inspection two year olds attend on Monday to Thursday between 9am and 12 noon. The Children's Centre supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. 11 staff work with the children, of these, two have qualified teacher status, one is level four and working towards level five, five have early years qualifications, one is working towards qualification, and two are teaching assistants. The building has wide entrances and doorways, and all rooms are on the ground floor making it easily accessible.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Attentive practitioners support young children and help them gain confidence in the nursery. The effective sharing of information with parents and carers about children's individual needs fosters an inclusive environment. The setting have their own evolving systems of evaluation which have begun a cycle of continuous development. They have identified the main strengths and areas for further development from a leadership point of view. Observation, discussion and some documentation show that children make good progress in their learning and development.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- build on systems to enable parents and carers to share information about children's interests and leaning to influence planning and assessment and promote learning together on a more regular basis
- continue to build upon the evolving culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to drive continuous development in all

areas, enabling all parties to be involved in the process.

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

There are robust procedures in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately recruited and complete suitability checks to protect children. Safeguarding procedures are clear and staff take part in ongoing training and discussion which ensures they have a good understanding of the procedure to follow in the event of a concern. The environment is well maintained, and access to and from site is managed safely to maintain security. Ongoing risk assessments ensure that any hazards are quickly identified and minimised.

The integrated services of the school and children's centre are clearly and effectively led and managed to ensure that each person understands their role and responsibilities. The team are enthusiastic, and have a clear focus of working together to ensure young children are included and supported within the nursery. The setting are currently reviewing the systems for ongoing reflective evaluation to best benefit children. Initially evaluation has particularly focused on making the environment welcoming and comfortable for two year olds. Parents have taken part in the annual evaluation within the school, although feedback specifically in relation to the service provided for very young children is verbal and general.

The setting is exceptionally well resourced. The storage and accessibility of toys and equipment has been reviewed to ensure that young children can see what is available and make independent choices about what they use both inside and out. These include those which reflect children's experiences in terms of home language and culture. Practitioners manage the free flow of children between the indoor and garden environments very well, which enables those more drawn to the outdoors to be meaningfully occupied and engaged in play-based learning. The use of visual prompt cards is particularly effective in aiding communication with young children, and those with English as an additional language. The addition of a large, comfortable sofa means that young children can snuggle up with a blanket, either on their own, with friends, or with adults to share stories and enjoy a more relaxed moment in the hustle of the busy nursery day. This helps young children to feel secure.

Partnerships are strong, particularly where families access more than one service within the school and children's centre. Key working systems mean that young children stay in a key worker group as they progress through the nursery, building relationships with their practitioner and peers as they do so. Relationships with other practitioners are fostered, and this helps children to settle. Partnerships with parents and carers are highly valued. A home visit provides a sound basis for sharing information which enables practitioners to meet children's needs. Key workers always talk to parents and carers on a daily basis, but this does not always include a two way sharing of information specifically related to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and young children's individual continuous learning and development. There are however termly opportunities to meet and focus on progress. Parent and carer feedback is very positive, they comment that staff

support children to settle and children make good progress.

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

Staff help young children to settle through warm interactions and being aware of their interests. For those who find joining the nursery challenging, the team are reflective and work to engage parents in a flexible approach to building up visits so that together they support the children with separation. This enables children to gain confidence and feel part of the nursery. Young children benefit from being with older friends. They are greeted warmly by older children who demonstrate a caring and nurturing approach and awareness of the younger children. Staff are observant, they step in quickly to help children to learn to share and co-operate with each other, and work consistently to give clear messages. There is lots of encouragement for children to be kind, and they enjoy having their photo put on the 'friendship bus' display in recognition of good deeds. Relationships are caring and warm and children make bonds.

The nursery is welcoming, and there are a wide variety of posters, photographs and pictures which interest children and which create a warm and stimulating environment and reflect the diverse world. There are an exceptional range of activities and resources provided for children both inside and out. Children move happily around, and the deployment of the team results in children being encouraged and supported as they play, extending their enjoyment and promoting their learning across each of the areas of learning. Young children are meaningfully occupied. They enthusiastically join in with dancing and singing in the garden, using ribbons as they move their bodies in time to the music. They spend an extended period of time creating sensory pictures, they mark make with chalk and decorate with glue and ginger spice. The teacher allows the children to follow their own interests, for example, a child selects scissors and spends an extended period cutting their picture, and another decides to make the play dough on a different table smell by sprinkling ginger on top. Practitioners are encouraging, they talk to children about what they are doing and build on their communication skills. The mix of adult led and child initiated play works very well.

Young children learn to follow routines through discussion and through observing their older friends. The atmosphere is industrious and children demonstrate that they understand how to behave to be safe, for example when carrying scissors they hold them pointing downwards, and when clearing their plate after snack they tuck their chair under the table. There are visual prompt to remind children to protect their health, for example by washing their hands after toileting, and staff talk to young children about how and why they need to do this. Practitioners have clear aims and objectives when delivering activities, and careful planning means that the team review children's progress and provide opportunities for children to practise their skills and make progress in their learning and development on an ongoing basis. Children mostly behave very well. The team have taken part in re-focusing on positive behaviour management and the relevance of age and stage of development since taking two year olds into the nursery. Where challenging

behaviour does occur the practitioners work as a team and look at how to best support wanted behaviours through early interaction and distraction. This fosters a caring and nurturing ethos. Young children are learning how to take turns, for example, a practitioner sits with a small group of children as they use an interactive white board to play a matching sounds and pictures game. Children's exuberance and excitement in using such equipment is calmed through conversation, whilst maintaining their enthusiasm, so that a group of children can enjoy the activity together.

## 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

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

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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