

St Thomas's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	08/03/2011
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting address	40 St. Thomas Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 1JP
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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Thomas's Day Nursery opened in 1986. It operates from a converted office building on two floors in the centre of Oxford. The nursery serves parents from around the Oxfordshire area as well as the local community. The nursery is within easy walking distance of the railway station and major bus routes, including the Park & Ride services.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 61 children aged from four months to five years on roll and 17 of these are three and four-year-olds who receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs, and a small number who speak English as an additional language.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 8.15am until 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and from 8:15am until 5:00pm on Fridays for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery employs 13 staff and of those, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. There is one member of staff working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly effective because of the skill and dedication of the staff. They actively promote development at an individual level, valuing diversity and equipping the children with very strong skills to stand them in good stead for the future. Resources are very well used to stimulate involvement and children receive all the support they need to thrive. Health and safety procedures are robust and good practice is routinely promoted throughout the day to help children learn. All children form close bonds with staff and feel very safe in their care consequently, behaviour is exemplary. Links with parents and children's other carers are strong and generally effective in helping to consolidate care and development plans for each child. The staff work exceptionally well as a team, routinely reflecting on all they do and trialling new ideas to maintain improvement and stay up to date.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- improving the two way flow of information with parents and children's other carers by removing outdated references from policies and strengthening links with other settings where there is currently limited contact.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All staff undergo effective safeguarding training and consequently have a very secure understanding of how to protect children from harm and make a referral if concerns arise. The staff supervise children appropriately in order to allow them to gain independence within a safe environment and they routinely teach good practice to cement children understanding of health and safety from an early age. All staff take responsibility for keeping the environment safe and act promptly if they have concerns. For example, they re-position outdoor climbing equipment if it gets too near the edge of the safety surface, and they remind children to be gentle as they play in order to avoid injury. The children routinely receive age appropriate explanations to clarify expectations and fully understand the reason for doing things. They capably take control of their personal needs, fetching themselves a drink and washing hands independently and confidently. They sit sensibly to eat their snack but do not always have a plate to promote table etiquette fully.

The key person bonds are strong and children benefit from a stable and dedicated team within each room to enhance their security and development. As a result, the children play confidently and use equipment effectively for their own purpose to develop their ideas. They respect resources and calmly tell others why they are 'having a short break' when they need to consider, for example, how to be gentle with equipment in the water tray, showing a very good understanding of expectations and consequences.

The staff continue their own development in order to stay up to date and maintain improvements. They have links with the local authority, seek input from children and parents and share their own ideas of good practice in order to remain effective and meet the needs of those who use the setting. They make all children's records available to their parents and carers, supplying information equally to anyone involved in children's care and development. These links are strong with those who visit the nursery and staff see in person but little information is returned from the providers whom they do not see. All of the required documentation is in place and generally of a high standard to be useful to all who use the setting. There are some outdated references in the policies, however have no impact on the care of the children, but hamper clarity for parents.

Equality and diversity are respected fully and staff celebrate individualism by treating each child as unique. They adapt the day appropriately to suit all who attend whilst helping the children understand the needs of others. As a result, the children form a calm and sociable little community where everyone has fun.

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

The children separate from their carers easily and promptly begin to play at their chosen activity. They confidently link with others and join in games on equal terms. Some laugh together at the water tray as they scoop and pour using a range of equipment to explore capacity and gain control over their movements. Others are happy on their own, touring the room to see what is on offer before choosing to read in the book corner. One finds a loose page that has fallen out of a book and confidently searches the shelf to locate where it came from. She matches the page against the covers, comparing the pictures of a brown skinned family to see if they match. The child inserts the page into the correct book and happily takes it to a member of staff to get it secured, solving problems confidently and successfully.

The staff join in play to extend and support ideas, offering suggestions and questioning children appropriately to build their confidence and reasoning skills. Some construct models from a range of plastic shapes, following a plan to complete the structure. Others work creatively using their own ideas and build, for example, a rocket that 'has fire coming out of it when it flies'. Moveable flaps are fitted at the back and the child demonstrates how they close to shut off the flames as the rocket lands, showing a well developed imagination and very sound understanding of how things work. The children frequently talk about what they do, showing pride in their achievements.

Fresh air and exercise are available every day to help children develop a healthy lifestyle. They climb, roller skate, use push along toys, and chalk in the fresh air, with staff joining in to make good use of all learning opportunities. The children don their hats and coats to keep themselves warm, adding to their understanding of their physical needs. All move confidently in a number of ways, challenging their skills on the soft safety surface to avoid injury, showing good control over their movements.

The children experience a wonderful range of outings to help develop a secure understanding of modern life and the local community. They visit the ice rink, take a journey on a train from the railway station and eat in the buffet to experience basic aspects of life that some might otherwise miss. Staff provide stimulating activities for all ages with babies exploring the texture of items such as wood, basket work, metal and a loofah. They sit on a rocking horse, climb over obstacles and are enveloped on staffs lap to complete puzzles or snuggle down for a bottle. Some staff sing quietly while giving cuddles, adding to the sense of calm. Despite the number and young ages of the children who attend there are no tears and everyone feels very safe. The staff are attentive and calm, acting as good role models to follow and creating a very harmonious atmosphere throughout. They tirelessly attend to the children's needs and are very pro-active in promoting development. The staff have extremely effective systems in place to observe what children do and record their progress. They have clear aims to work towards and ensure that all staff know how to move children on in order to provide appropriate challenges. As a result, the learning and development programmes are extremely

effective and children become confident and sociable young people from a very early age.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met