

St Thomas' Church Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300781
Inspection date	12/05/2011
Inspector	Tracey Outram

Setting address	Nairn Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S10 1UL
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Telephone number	0114 2671090
Email	nursery@stthomascrookes.org
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

St. Thomas' Church Nursery has been in operation for 25 years. It is situated within St. Thomas' Church in the Crookes area of Sheffield. The children have the use of a dedicated playroom and secure outside play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 26 children aged from three to five years. There are currently 33 children on roll. The nursery is open Monday, Tuesday and Friday 9am to 1pm, Wednesday and Thursday 9am to 3pm. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years.

There are six members of staff who work with the children on a daily basis. Of these, the nursery manager holds qualified teacher status and three practitioners hold relevant level 3 qualifications. There are another two practitioners who are working towards a level 3 qualification. One of these is a qualified secondary school teacher who has specialised in working with children who have special educational needs. There are also six regular volunteers who work with the children and one of the volunteers has completed training approved by the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The setting receives support from the local authority and is managed by St. Thomas Council of trustees.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The children attending the setting make excellent progress in their learning and development. They are provided with extremely high levels of care and they take a dynamic role in their learning, responding to challenges with high levels of enthusiasm. Exceedingly strong partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies enable the setting to be fully inclusive and to provide very well for the unique needs of every child. Effective self-evaluation is an integral part of the practice and the dedicated staff team have an excellent capacity to drive and secure further improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhancing partnerships with others providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage who share the care of the children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Strong leadership and management in the setting ensures that children are safeguarded. Staff are consistently aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues and they know how to report any concerns about children's well-being to the appropriate authority. All staff are vetted and they demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to maintain children's good health and welfare. They diligently monitor the safety of the equipment, complete risk assessments and ensure that the premises are suitable for the children to investigate. Resources are used effectively and children have opportunities to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play space. This contributes to the children's ability to explore and make connections in their learning.

Staff make exceptional effort to ensure that every child is cared for according to their personal needs and their parent's wishes. They strive to overcome barriers to achievement and children with additional care and special educational needs and/or disabilities are given outstandingly good support to ensure that they are fully included in nursery routines and activities. For example, staff organise activities and manage the premises to create an enabling environment which helps children feel valued and safe. Parental engagement is outstanding. Parents are provided with personalised guidance and information about the nursery curriculum and how they can support their children's personal learning at home. Parents are invited to attend the setting as a helper once each term and they attend coffee mornings where they can chat with children's key person and add to their children's records. Staff also use this time to show parents images of the children achieving and enjoying via the use of a digital photo- frame. This helps parents to understand the purpose of some activities and see how they link to the six areas of learning as defined in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition, parents suggestions are gathered through questionnaires and their suggestions are actively taken on board and developed to enhance the provision. Children's transitions to school are well planned and all relevant information is shared. However, partnerships with other provisions who share the care of the children are still being developed.

The setting's self-evaluation process is rigorous and gets to the heart of what the setting does well and what needs to develop. All identified priorities for improvement are well planned and effectively monitored by senior leaders through making observations of the children's progress and holding discussions with staff, parents and other professionals. The staff team are motivated and share a strong desire to drive the setting forwards. For example, the work completed on enhancing children's access mathematics and the continuous provision, demonstrates an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

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

Members of staff are highly effective practitioners. They actively listen to the children and use observations to plan activities that support the children's individual learning and development needs. Consequently, the children make exceptional progress as they undertake highly challenging activities with a wide range of materials. For example, they make models, demonstrating exceptionally good concentration skills and the ability to think creatively. They competently deal with problems, such as how to fix together different media and materials to facilitate their ideas.

Literacy and numeracy skills are developing rapidly as a result of highly successful adult interventions and the effective use of resources. For example, the exceptional use of activities, such as baking, singing and gardening increase children's vocabulary and competence in speaking and listening, both independently and in groups. The children have many opportunities to make marks and practise their emergent writing skills. In addition, the children's awareness of letters and sounds is effectively enhanced through the use of rhymes, songs and focussed activities. For example, as the children learn about ponds, they are encouraged to emphasise the initial sound of words that they are learning, such as 'f' for 'froglet'. The children develop a broad understanding of numbers through many indoor and outdoor play experiences. They expertly calculate, explore shapes and patterns and use terms such as more, less, bigger and smaller with accuracy. Similarly, the children successfully use small world resources such as the farm animals to sort and match and explore measure and quantity through activities, such as sand and water play. Numeracy is carefully considered and permeates the children's early experiences. Therefore, the children gain confidence and competence to solve practical problems.

Aware of the importance of helping children understand about the wider world staff ensure that children enjoy first-hand experiences. For example, they grow plants and edible foods such as green beans and potatoes, and visit the local post office where they handle real money, buy stamps and send cards. The children also develop a secure knowledge of information and communication technology during the use of digital cameras, light-boxes, and media equipment. This helps children to understand the use of electronic equipment in everyday life. Particular emphasis is placed on helping the children to understand the harmful effects of discrimination. The children learn to value diversity and avoid gender stereotyping. They benefit extremely well from socialising with visitors to the nursery who increase their knowledge of a range of different professions including chefs, carpenter and filmmakers and musicians. This help the children to appreciate how different people have different skill-sets and teaches children that hobbies and interests can also become a profession.

The children enjoy extremely warm and caring relationships with staff which helps them to develop a strong sense of belonging. They demonstrate extremely good relationships, showing tolerance of others and learning to deal with their own feelings and emotions.

They recognise the importance of eating healthy foods and show an understanding of the health needs of children in the group. The children understand health and hygiene practices, such as handwashing and safely disposing of tissues. The children are highly competent and benefit from opportunities that allow them to take responsibility for preparing and serving their own snacks. The children also have extremely good confidence and the ability to climb, balance and use equipment that supports dexterity as they weave, use scissors and cutlery. Overall, the children attending the setting have a strong sense of security. They are supported exceptionally well by enthusiastic staff who encourage curiosity and help children to make excellent progress overall.

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	2
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	1

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	1
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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