

St Thomas's Day Nursery

40 St. Thomas Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 1JP



Inspection date

19 February 2015

Previous inspection date

8 March 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Children have close emotional bonds with the staff due to the exceptionally well-developed key-person system. This means staff have extremely close relationships with the children and their families.
- Staff support and develop children's language exceptionally well. They use a variety of techniques, such as, signing, questioning and introducing ambitious vocabulary with children. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress.
- Leadership of the nursery is inspirational. The manager shows an uncompromising desire to support and develop the staff. They are continually improving their skills and knowledge. This has a direct impact on the quality of care and education for the children.
- Staff complete outstanding assessment records on children. Regular detailed information from parents, as well as detailed observations from staff, lead to clear and accurate records of children's progress. This allows for gaps in learning for individuals and groups to be quickly identified and addressed.
- The nursery is safe, welcoming and well equipped. Children enjoy a rich and varied learning environment that challenges them and focuses their learning.
- Regular outings and active involvement in community projects provide children with a wide range of exciting and varied learning opportunities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop further the system where staff observe each other's practice, to enhance staff's evaluation of their own performance and build on their already first-rate practice.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children at free play, in group times and staff interactions with them.
- The inspector sampled documents including policies, registers and records of children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took into account their views.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector and manager conducted a joint observation.

Inspector

Natasha Crellin

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding

Staff use their expert teaching skills to support children's learning and provide exciting play and learning opportunities. Children participate with enthusiasm in all activities and are highly motivated learners. Staff plan sessions that meet each child's individual needs, which ensures they are interested and focussed. Babies respond eagerly to singing songs they know well, such as 'sleeping bunnies'. They clap and bounce in time to the music and develop good concentration skills. Children have extensive opportunities to initiate and lead their own play. Groups of children independently write shopping lists on small clipboards. Their literacy skills are consistently extended as they enjoy writing and drawing, inside and out, with a large variety of resources in all areas of the nursery. This effectively supports their pre-writing skills. There are excellent systems in place to ensure parents are fully involved in their child's learning. Consequently, all children make rapid progress from their starting points.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is outstanding

Staff encourage children to become independent from an early age. The youngest children feed themselves and adults encourage them to try tasks, such as removing their shoes, before they assist them. This helps them prepare for the move to school and future life. Children have access to a large variety of stimulating toys, which they can access independently. Staff know the children well and show genuine care for them. They understand what specific things will soothe children. As a result, children quickly settle into play after their parents leave. Staff promote effective hygiene practices and healthy lifestyles at all times. Children enjoy nutritious and healthy meals and snacks prepared in the kitchen. Children learn to keep safe as they follow the safety routines, such as waiting by the shed in the garden, while the adult double checks the gate is closed and secure.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding

The manager is unrelenting in her desire to see her staff, and the nursery achieve the highest standards. Staff supervision is focussed and leads staff to be highly reflective of their strengths and goals. This is being extended to staff observing and learning from each other. Management follow highly effective systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff and to promote their professional development. The manager and her staff safeguard children extremely well. The manager has an excellent understanding of how to promote, assess and monitor children's learning and development. Outstanding assessment systems means children's needs are quickly identified and addressed.

Setting details

Unique reference number	134023
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	825580
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	55
Name of provider	St Thomas's Day Nursery
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2011
Telephone number	01865249800

St Thomas's Day Nursery opened in 1986. It operates from a converted office building on two floors in the centre of Oxford, Oxfordshire. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education aged three and four. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is open Monday to Thursday from 8.15am until 5.30pm, and Fridays from 8.15am until 5pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 13 staff and, of those, all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

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