Inspection of St Thomas's Day Nursery

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

Inspection date:	10 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive happy and excited for their day at this welcoming and inclusive setting. They separate confidently from parents as they are greeted by friendly staff. Information gathered from parents supports staff to meet children's needs. As a result, children feel safe and secure. They seek out staff if they need comfort or reassurance. This helps children have a sense of belonging.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They are positive role models and children behave well. Staff use positive reinforcement, praise and give children gentle reminders about sharing and being kind. If minor conflicts arise, staff support children to find solutions, helping them to resolve issues.

Children have ample opportunities to be outdoors. Staff plan a wide variety of activities in the garden that capture children's interest. As a result, children are highly engaged and spend an extended amount of time at their chosen activity. Younger children show delight when stomping dinosaurs through the wet mud. Older children work together as they decide what game they will play. Children laugh as they follow actions when dancing, which encourages them to stretch, bend and move in a variety of ways to develop their physical skills. Younger children learning to walk are encouraged to stand and take a few steps.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders and managers have high expectations for children's development. The well-sequenced curriculum is based on children's learning needs and interests. Staff have a clear vision of what they want children to learn which is planned around their individual needs. They use regular observations and assessments of children to inform planning.
- Staff report that they are happy in their roles. Managers support staff through effective one-to-one meetings. This helps to identify any support staff may need and discuss training opportunities. Regular team meetings and training days ensure staff develop their knowledge and practice.
- Overall, children's communication and language is supported well. Staff engage children in conversations to encourage children to think and extend their learning. Older children are introduced to new words such as 'excavator'. Staff encourage children to repeat this word and copy the actions when learning about the digger. During carpet time, younger children listen to rhymes and songs. Staff effectively use simple signing to support children to understand what is happening, children then use this to communicate their needs. However, interactions are not always consistent to ensure that quieter children gain the most from their learning experiences.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported well by staff.

From a young age, children learn to identify and manage their emotions. Children show pride as staff praise them on their achievements. Older children show kindness to younger children as they play together in the garden. Staff encourage children to be independent. For example, older children self-serve their lunch. This means, children are well prepared for their transition to school.

- Staff teach children about being healthy. Trips to local shops provide children with opportunities to explore different fruits and vegetables. Staff teach children about the importance of brushing their teeth and staying safe in the sun. This means children are beginning to understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Staff support children's mathematical development well. They count with the children as they climb steps, encouraging children to join in. Staff introduce words such as long and short, big and small. Children then use these independently in their play.
- Children develop a love of reading. They choose books to look at independently or with their friends. Staff read stories and provide children with props so they can take an active role in the story telling. This supports children to build on their early literacy skills.
- Staff work effectively with parents and other agencies. This helps to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Leaders work hard so that children and their families have access to the relevant support agencies. They use advise from other professionals to ensure they plan precisely for children's next steps. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Parents praise the staff for the care and support their children receive. Staff build positive relationships with parents, providing them with regular feedback about their child's day and development. Parents are provided with information so they can further support their child at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to consistently make the most of interactions, particularly for children who are more reluctant to speak.

Setting details

Unique reference number	134023
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10398859
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	49
Name of registered person	St Thomas Day Nursery
Registered person unique reference number	RP518093
Telephone number	01865249800
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

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 for children aged three and four years. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager holds an early years qualification at level 7, one member of staff has a qualification at level 6, four have qualifications at level 5, and three hold qualifications at level 3. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8.15am until 5.30pm, for 51 weeks of the year.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Nicky Butler

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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