

Inspection of Sandhills Day Nursery Heath Mill

Heath Mill House, Heath Mill Road, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire
WV5 8AP

Inspection date: 29 July 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy, confident learners. They greet visitors with a cheerful hello and eagerly share their learning with them, such as the books they use to inspire their drawings. This shows that children feel safe and secure. Respectful relationships between staff and children are evident. For instance, when babies babble, staff respond by mimicking their sounds. They engage with children at their level, reading stories and singing songs. An effective key-person system is in place, with a secondary key person ensuring continuity during staff absences. Parents and carers value the close relationships all staff develop with their children.

Children are given opportunities to practise their self-help skills. For example, young children learn to use cutlery to eat. Older children serve their own meals and pour their own drinks. Staff stay close by, praising their efforts and offering support when needed. This promotes children's positive behaviour at mealtimes. Leaders allocate funding based on the specific needs of eligible children. For instance, resources have been purchased to support children who are experiencing difficult times, helping them to express their feelings. Leaders evaluate the use of funding to ensure interventions have a positive impact on children.

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

- Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced purposeful professional development for staff, which has strengthened their focus on children's learning, especially for babies, and improved the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- There are secure spaces for both quiet activities and active play that support children's physical and emotional well-being. For example, staff skilfully roll and spin bracelets across the floor to encourage babies to crawl and reach. Low-level furniture allows babies to pull themselves up and practise standing, helping to strengthen core muscles in preparation for walking.
- Staff monitor children's development to identify any gaps in learning. They work effectively with external professionals to implement agreed targets. Recent training has strengthened staff's ability to access additional funding quickly, enabling timely support and early intervention for children who need it.
- Children show a strong desire to learn. However, staff do not always encourage them to engage promptly in activities, which can lead to unnecessary waiting. In addition, some staff miss opportunities to support children in leading their own learning, limiting their active participation and independence during activities.
- During the inspection, the back gate was found to be closed but not locked. Leaders took immediate action to minimise any risk to children. They promptly reinforced expectations with staff and displayed clear signage to remind them to lock the gate after taking out the bins, helping to prevent unauthorised access to the grounds.

- Staff demonstrate secure knowledge of how to report any concerns about a child's welfare. They attend relevant training and supervision meetings, and leaders actively support them in keeping their safeguarding knowledge up to date. Leaders share safety tips with parents to help them to keep children safe at home.
- During the inspection, staff and children took part in an unplanned fire drill. Staff used this opportunity to help children to learn more about fire safety. For example, children painted pictures of fires, made hoses from paper and built fire stations from blocks, using books and technology as reference. Children know what to do in the event of a fire and why it is important to evacuate promptly.
- Through play, staff promote children's mathematical development. For example, they encourage children to investigate size and shape and guide them to use terms like heavy and light to explain concepts such as floating and sinking. These interactions help children to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Staff plan a variety of activities to enhance children's language skills. For example, they use picture cards to encourage children to learn and name body parts. As children clean the dolls, staff instruct them to clean specific body parts, reinforcing their understanding. Babies enjoy exploring farm animals, listening to related songs and trying to imitate animal sounds. These repeated learning experiences help to build children's confidence in using language.
- Parents are happy with the setting and appreciate how attentive staff are to their children's individual needs, such as creating activities that support oral health and managing emotions. They receive regular updates about their children's learning, enabling them to continue supporting their children's development at home.
- Although staff give parents opportunities to provide important information about their children, they do not consistently remind them to return it promptly, which delays its use.

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:

- encourage staff to regularly reflect on their interactions with children to promote greater engagement and independence in children's learning
- obtain detailed information from all parents more promptly to ensure their views are used effectively to enhance each child's individual planning and care.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2558047
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10379988
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	71
Number of children on roll	138
Name of registered person	Sandhills Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP525837
Telephone number	01902 896317
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2024

Information about this early years setting

Sandhills Day Nursery Heath Mill registered in 2019 and is located in Wombourne, Wolverhampton. The setting employs 25 members of childcare staff, of whom 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. It operates Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions run from 7.30am to 6pm. The setting receives government funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mikaela Stallard

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk to discuss the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about what they like to do when they are at the setting.
- 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 a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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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