

Inspection of The Little School House Nursery

The Little School House, Sheffield S8 8QB

Inspection date: 20 August 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff in the nursery prepare children well for the next stage in their learning, including starting school. Children make good progress through learning that builds systematically overall on their earlier experiences. Staff help babies, for example, to progress from highchairs to sitting at a table and to use a spoon to eat their well-prepared meals. Older children learn to serve the nutritious salad and other food themselves, use knives and forks effectively and drink from open cups. Staff help children to develop enthusiasm and inquisitiveness to explore and understand the world around them. For instance, children enjoy kneading and flattening clay to create the whales, snails and other animals inspired by a familiar story. They understand that the clay will dry hard and they can paint it.

Children learn to behave well and follow staff's clear guidance and expectations. For example, they learn how to move in pairs and manage the stairs carefully as they move around indoors and outdoors. Staff help children to share and take turns in their games and role play. They work closely with parents to support babies and children to establish good routines for sleep and toileting, for example, both in the nursery and at home.

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

- Leaders and staff implement a curriculum that supports children's progression across all areas of learning. However, children's mark-making and creative skills are not consistently built on in a structured way. For example, some children are given drawing and painting resources that require fine motor control beyond their current stage, which prevents them from consolidating and extending the skills they already have.
- Leaders have high expectations. They are ambitious for all children to have a memorable time in their care and achieve their potential. Leaders are reflective and have robust procedures, such as comprehensive induction, training and supervision programmes, to guide and challenge staff in all aspects of their work. They make good use of the close relationships with other nurseries in the management company to share skills and experiences.
- Staff know children well. They gather and share useful information with parents to support learning and development. However, planning and interactions do not always build on this knowledge to ensure consistent challenge for all children. For example, during some activities, staff do not adapt their questioning to extend children's thinking and deepen understanding.
- Staff strongly promote children's positive attitudes and good behaviour. They regularly join in conversations with children during their games and activities to ensure they are happy and engaged. Staff encourage children to be polite and thoughtful through, for example, their gentle and calm manner towards them.

They give clear instructions to support children's movements between activities and ensure they feel cared for.

- Children's engagement with books and songs is planned well to enrich children's communication skills and their knowledge of the world. They offer children a carefully considered selection of fiction and non-fiction to introduce new vocabulary and experiences. Staff read stories regularly in engaging ways that enhance children's concentration and anticipation. They make good use of repeated stories through the 'book of the week' to introduce children to memorable words and phrases that enrich their learning experiences.
- Children's mathematical skills are systematically developed as they progress through nursery. Staff focus on helping children to build a good understanding of the quantities of numbers as well as developing their counting and sequencing skills. For instance, babies and toddlers build a good understanding of one to three through many sorting activities, such as catching toy ducks in their water play. Older children build on this understanding to count accurately to five and 10 to match quantities to written numbers.
- Parents strongly recommend the nursery. They comment on the warmth and care shown by the staff and their good understanding of their children's needs. They welcome the information on their children's progress and the opportunities to participate in workshops to understand how children learn and develop.

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:

- strengthen the planning for children's mark-making and creative learning so that their skills develop in a systematic and progressive way
- focus staff's professional development on ensuring they consistently challenge and meet children's individual needs through, for example, varying the questions they ask.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY551207
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10407372
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	62
Number of children on roll	102
Name of registered person	Early Years Care & Education Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP551205
Telephone number	01142359993
Date of previous inspection	7 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

The Little School House Nursery registered in 2017 and is based in the Woodseats area of Sheffield. The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, 7am to 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Andrew Clark

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The manager and deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation of children's learning experiences and evaluated the activities.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke to children about their experiences as they played.
- The manager provided the inspector with relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and also took account of their views from written feedback.

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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