



Tots Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113796
Inspection date	04 December 2006
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	c/o Bewbush Community Primary School, Dorsten Square, Bewbush, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8XW
Telephone number	07811914153
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Registered person	Tots Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tots Pre-School has been established since 1970. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and operates from within a purpose built unit in the grounds of Bewbush Community Primary School, in Crawley, West Sussex. There is a fully enclosed area available for outside play. The pre-school serves the surrounding area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open, Monday to Friday, during term time only, from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:15 to 14:45.

There are currently 39 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of eight staff work with the children; five of whom hold NVQ Level 2 qualifications; one of whom holds an NVQ Level 3 qualification and two staff are currently working towards NVQ Level 3. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many opportunities for outside activities. They use the pre-school garden throughout the year, and in all weather, ensuring that all children have plenty of fresh air and exercise. This contributes towards children's healthy development. Staff ensure that children are dressed appropriately to ensure their good health. For example, children wear coats and gloves and use Wellington boots to protect their clothing before splashing in the mud and digging in the wet sand. This contributes towards children's health and general welfare.

Children run and move around freely. They skilfully negotiate wheeled toys round obstacles and use a range of resources for balancing, crawling and developing co-ordination. For example, children balance on a home-made, low level wall of milk crates. They dig in the mud and develop their co-ordination as they initiate their own game, placing hoops over a traffic cone. This helps children to develop their physical skills and play active games to improve their muscle development.

The pre-school is clean and well-maintained. Staff are vigilant in preventing the spread of illness and infection. They implement appropriate strategies to safeguard children, such as teaching children the importance of hand washing and keeping the food preparation area clean. During nappy change procedures, staff wear gloves and use baby wipes to prevent cross-infection. The place mats used at snack time are cleaned appropriately with anti-bacterial spray to guard against infection. These strategies help to keep children healthy and ensure good hygienic practice.

Children's dietary needs are met well. Staff are very aware of each child's specific dietary requirements and are sensitive in adhering to each child's cultural and health needs. Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, cheese, crackers and bread sticks and access drinks easily. There is a good selection of drinks available and children enjoy making their choices each day. The new snack bar routine offers children a sociable and relaxed environment and children take an active part in pouring their own drinks, helping themselves to become independent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are bright and welcoming and offer a safe and secure environment for children. Good attention is given to promoting children's security. The outside area is fully enclosed, protecting children's security. Staff are vigilant at all times, to ensure that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. During all sessions, access to the premises is closely monitored and

all visitors have to ring a doorbell to gain access. This enables staff to prevent unauthorised visitors from gaining access and helps to safeguard children.

Children play with a wide selection of equipment, toys and resources, all of which are checked regularly to ensure they are safe for children's use and do not present a hazard. This helps to keep children safe.

Children learn about safety as part of topic work. For example, in preparation for firework night, children talked about firework safety and the importance of keeping themselves safe. Children enjoy visits from the emergency services to help them understand how to stay safe.

Some staff have an awareness of their responsibilities regarding child protection, although not all staff have completed formal training. This restricts some staff from understanding the appropriate procedures to follow, to fully safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the pre-school. They develop positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy many purposeful play experiences, encouraging children to develop curiosity and interest in their surroundings. Children enjoy very close, warm relationships with staff and there is a happy and stimulating atmosphere. Children develop confidence and independence as they participate fully in all the activities available to them.

Children's individual care needs are met well and staff are attentive to addressing these. For example, good support is given to helping children with personal care routines.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and offer a stimulating and exciting learning environment. Staff training has been difficult this year, due to staff absence and long term sick leave. As a result of this, not all staff have confidence in curriculum planning and assessment. This results in planning records being very brief and lacking information on how children's individual learning needs and progress towards the early learning goals is planned for. The current records do not reflect the diverse range of play and learning activities provided.

Staff make full use of the outside area to extend children's learning and are responsive to encouraging child-initiated play. For example, children enjoy lining up the milk crates in the outside area to climb and balance on. Staff interact sensitively with all children and good support is provided for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children play happily and co-operatively. They greet their friends enthusiastically and share and take turns in their play. Children develop independence throughout the daily routine. For example, they self-register on arrival, choose their own activities and manage to put their coats and boots on for outside activities.

Children listen to one another well. They are responsive during group discussion and engage in conversation with both adults and their peers. This is extended well by staff who ask children questions to develop vocabulary and language skills. Staff support children who speak English as an additional language. There is good use of pictures and symbols, offering a visual stimulus to children learning English.

Children develop an awareness of letters and sounds and attempt to write their own names in their art work. There is provision for writing and mark making, enabling children to develop pencil control and pre-writing skills. The cosy and attractive book corner enables children to sit comfortably to enjoy books.

Children learn about numbers and see examples of numbers displayed throughout the pre-school. Number symbols are included in signs. For example, children understand how many children can play in each area, by looking at the number signs. This enables children to develop an awareness of number value. Children count spontaneously in their play and explore mathematical concepts such as sorting and matching. They develop an awareness of the concept of time, as they use a sand timer to indicate turns on the computer. When the timer sounds after five minutes, children clearly understand that it is someone else's turn.

There are many opportunities for children to explore and investigate. They dig in the mud and sand and explore natural materials. Children plant seeds and watch them grow and observe the weather each day, noting seasonal change. Children explore scientific properties as they excitedly roll items down the ramp. This helps children to develop a practical understanding of speed, gravity and forces. Children use the computer competently and clearly understand how to use the mouse and keyboard.

Children use their imagination in their play. They recreate scenes which are familiar to them and make good use of the role play resources, both inside and outside. Children's art work reflects their own creativity and there are opportunities for children to use a range of textures and media.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated equally and fairly. Staff are very sensitive towards each child's individual needs and ensure they meet these in daily practice. Children have freedom of choice and are encouraged to develop their independence in choosing their own activities and type of drink each day. This helps children to feel valued as individuals and increases their confidence and self-esteem. The premises are fully accessible to both adults and children and provision is available to support children with individual learning needs.

Children learn about the cultural needs of others. They develop respect for one another as all children are treated fairly and without discrimination. Staff have regard for all children's ethnic and cultural background and provision is available to support children and their families who speak English as an additional language. As a result of this, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is strong provision in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work closely with parents/carers and external agencies, wherever necessary, to ensure that all children's needs are addressed appropriately. A visiting Speech and Language therapist visits the group regularly to support all children.

Children behave very well. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities, ensuring that all children remain busy and focused at all times, preventing the opportunity for unacceptable behaviour. Staff encourage a positive and happy environment and celebrate children's achievements, helping to maintain a busy and purposeful atmosphere.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff know the children and their families very well and work closely with all parents/carers to address children's personal needs. This fosters strong relationships for children between their homes and the pre-school. Staff provide a very relaxed and welcoming environment for parents and carers and information regarding children's progress is exchanged regularly on an informal basis, which parents have stated they prefer. The committee work hard to encourage parental involvement by organising social events and meetings. This helps parents and carers to understand the pre-school routine and curriculum and contribute towards their children's learning and development.

Written information is provided regarding Ofsted contact details and a record of complaints is maintained, in compliance with the National Standards.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are effective procedures in place to ensure that all staff working with children are appropriately cleared to do so. The staff team is strong and dedicated, however, long term staff absence this year has resulted in staff not being able to access and complete appropriate training. As a result of this, staffing arrangements are being reviewed to ensure that there is always an appropriately qualified supervisor in place, who holds, or is working towards, an NVQ Level 3 qualification, or equivalent.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been many changes in the management committee this year and this has resulted in difficulties for staff. However, the current committee is strong and demonstrates a very positive commitment to supporting staff and addressing all identified weaknesses in the provision. The procedures for staff appraisals are being reviewed to enable staff to identify their training needs.

The daily routine is organised well, offering children plenty of play and learning opportunities, both inside and outside. Effective staff deployment ensures that children receive high levels of individual attention and support.

Regulatory documentation is in place and contains appropriate detail. An accurate record of children's attendance is maintained. Pre-school policies and procedures are in place and most staff have a working knowledge of these. Children's records are stored securely and confidentially.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Ofsted Children Act inspection, four recommendations were raised. These related to documentation associated with incidents, safety policies and complaints and the recruitment procedures. Staff have addressed all these issues. All documentation relating to incidents, safety policies and complaints is now maintained appropriately. This ensures that all documentation contributes towards safeguarding children.

The recruitment procedures have been reviewed and all staff vacancies are now advertised externally. All appropriate vetting checks are carried out to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

At the last Ofsted Education inspection, three key issues were raised. These related to staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, planning and assessment procedures and the organisation of activities to address children's individual learning needs. Staff have partly met these issues. Due to staff absence, training opportunities have not been utilised fully this year to improve staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This prevents the less experienced staff from taking an active involvement in the planning and assessment format to record children's individual learning needs. This still remains a weakness in provision.

There is improved provision in place for staff to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adapt activities to meet these children's needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted which required the provider, or Ofsted, to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the opportunities for all staff to develop their understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection
- devise an action plan to detail how the supervisor present at each session either holds, or is working towards, an NVQ 3 in Early Years Care and Education, in accordance with the National Standards

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the less experienced staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to take an active part in the planning and assessment process
- increase the range of information included in the planning records to reflect how all children's progress towards the early learning goals is appropriately planned for
- increase the opportunities for staff development, through the use of appraisals and further training

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk