

Tiptree U R C Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650158
Inspection date	26 April 2007
Inspector	Barbara Ann Bush
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Registered person	Tiptree 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tiptree URC Pre-School is one of three settings run by one committee. It opened originally in 1970, moving to the new site in 2003. It operates from rooms on the upper floor of a church building. It is situated in the village of Tiptree, Essex. A maximum of 20 children may attend the group at any one time.

The setting is open each weekday from 09.30 until 12.00 Tuesday to Friday; 09.30 until 13.00 on Monday and 13.00 until 15.30 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The group is open for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are no pets on site.

There are currently 61 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 48 children receive funding for early education. Children come mainly from the local catchment area. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The group employs nine members of staff. There are three members of staff, including the manager holding an appropriate early years qualification. In addition one member of staff is

working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the area SENCO (special needs coordinator), the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is adequately promoted. Children wash their hands regularly after toileting as part of their everyday hygiene routine. Children are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for personal cleanliness, their clothes and keeping the room tidy. Children receive appropriate medical attention as staff members have a secure understanding of the group's policies and procedures when dealing with illness, accidents and administering medication. Children are protected further by the presence of trained first aid staff who are confident about dealing with any emergencies that may arise.

Children are well nourished and have some opportunities to learn about healthy eating, making choices about nutritious snacks and drinking regularly throughout the day. The children's dietary requirements are provided by their parents and staff. On one day a week the children bring lunch boxes and have their midday meal together. Children enjoy a sociable time together for their snack and mealtimes. They are able to discuss the day's events and staff can then initiate conversation regarding making healthy options and the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. Children had a lively conversation about the taste of cucumber and whether it was liked or disliked.

Children's physical development is fostered by the provision of a range of games and activities designed to enhance movement and flexibility. Children participate enthusiastically and clearly enjoy the challenges presented to them. They like the use of a parachute, hoops and balls. One child started a game of rolling down the grassy slope and many more joined in. As the group are in an upstairs room, they have structured sessions in the garden and all of the children take part together. Time can be limited and there is not the freedom for children to wander freely in and out.

Children in receipt of funding for early education participate in group games and enjoy physical activity. They are learning to control their bodies as they move around and negotiate space well. This is seen clearly in the playroom as space is at a premium; children rarely bump into one another and can move resources easily to meet their needs. Children do have limited use of larger pieces of equipment. However, improvements have been made about access to the outside space and the need for more resources has been identified. Children use tools with confidence, filling containers, cutting with scissors and writing with pens and pencils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright room that is modern and well-maintained. They use the upstairs of a church building; self-contained with a small kitchen area and toilets. The standard of decoration is good and the use of an air-conditioning machine ensures that staff and children remain cool during the hot weather. The room benefits from a number of large windows that let in natural light. The walls are decorated with posters and children's artwork. Children enter the room happily, knowing where they can sit, the location of resources and that they are able to start playing with toys straightaway.

Children access a wide range of age appropriate toys. They are in good condition and maintained well. They can easily make choices as toys are within reach, stored at child height and labelled with pictures and words. Toys are varied and rotated to give children fun and challenge during the sessions. Equipment is child-sized and appropriate for their use. Children therefore have access to resources that interest and stimulate their imaginations.

Staff are aware of the comprehensive health and safety policies. Written risk assessments are completed to ensure that the premises is safe and this also applies to any outings that are taken. The outside area is free of any hazards, there are no poisonous plants and it is securely fenced. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure and this is practised with the children at regular intervals. Staffing ratios are maintained and at times exceeded, ensuring that children are well supervised. Consent forms are in place for taking photographs and applying sunscreen. There is a secure collection policy to ensure children only leave with the correct designated persons. Children are learning about staying safe and are given clear, consistent instructions from the staff. There are very few accidents as children do not run around inside and take care when carrying objects.

There is a comprehensive child protection policy in place. Following a recommendation made at the last inspection, staff have completed further training and now feel much more confident about the referral process, signs and symptoms. Parents are aware of the staff's responsibility for safeguarding the children as the policy is made accessible to them. This increased understanding and knowledge by staff assists them in protecting the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Play activities are planned by the staff but the children have input and there is lots of spontaneity during the sessions, for example, children wanted the slide out to play with and room was quickly made for them. Children make up their own games and use their imaginations particularly when using small world figures and dressing-up clothes. One child was dressed as a ballerina demonstrating to the group how agile and supple she was, bending her legs and balancing.

The range of activities enables the children to explore and investigate. Resources are arranged on low shelves for easy access and children can choose to change what they are doing. The room is organised to ensure that as well as table top and floor toys, children can sit quietly and talk with their friends. Children are able to cooperate and share their toys and equipment. They have already made friends and look for each other to share toys and games. Staff members are aware of the children's needs and are alert when problems arise or there is a need to organise something different for an individual child. For example, a child needing extra attention when leaving his parents. Staff quickly distracted with a musical keyboard that caught his imagination and he then spent some time playing notes and enjoying the sounds he produced.

Play flows around the room. Enthusiasm from the staff members ensures that the children enjoy the games and concentration is sustained. Children are able to play for extended periods, for example, building brick towers with purpose and concentration. A child tried to protect the tower from falling but when it did he accepted the inevitable with good humour. He then turned his attention to a farm on the floor and became engrossed in an imaginary game involving the animals. Children are able to talk with confidence, approach the staff for their needs and feel safe and reassured during the session. Staff members give their praise and acknowledgement of children's achievements generously.

Staff members are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework well in their planning for the younger children. They are keeping development records and are pinpointing areas to extend children's play and learning experiences. Plans are in place to extend the use of the framework to be in place when the new Early Years Foundation Stage becomes operational.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff members have completed training on the delivery of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge successfully to implement the six areas of learning. The manager intends to complete a degree course with the open university to extend her skills. All six areas of learning are covered in the planning. It is clear from the activity plans what the children are intended to learn and the purpose of the task. There is sufficient challenge and the more able children are extended as plans are adapted. Plans are inclusive, all children are welcomed and resources are acquired to meet their needs. Staff members have completed the appropriate training to help children maximise their potential. Children behave very well and staff are aware of setting boundaries. Children are spoken to kindly but firmly. Staff members spend the majority of the time working directly with the children. There are regular assessments and observations completed on the children and these are incorporated into their development plans. This information allows staff to help children to move on to the next stage.

Children can say and use numbers in order; they are quite comfortable counting up to five. There are number charts and posters around the room to remind children visually of number formation. Children can create and re-create simple patterns using mosaics and copying. They understand about space and moving objects around to fit in. However, children are not using numbers in everyday activities to reinforce their learning. Staff members are not always encouraging children to count out objects, compare or calculate as they play. Children enjoy music and movement sessions, enjoying action songs such as, 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' and 'the wheels on the bus'. They dress-up frequently and use their imaginations in role play. Real photographs are being used to show children the world around them. They also use a good variety of materials in their collage work, for example, feathers, glitter and cloth. Children are able to express their senses, such as, describing the taste and smell of cucumber. Children can talk confidently and take turns in a conversation. They show understanding of the elements of stories and enjoy listening to a member of staff reading. One child told the rest of the group a story about a cat and a mouse that he had made up. He asked them all to join in with actions and kept them amused for some minutes. However, children make little use of the book corner or show enjoyment of books independently. Further encouragement fosters children's attempts at letter writing and the understanding that words carry meaning.

Children are investigating objects and materials. They are growing carrots, mung beans, radishes and onions in vials and on wet paper. They are captivated by the growing process and can notice the differences in the growing stages. Children can play with everyday technology, such as, computer, registers, telephones and switches on the various toys. They are learning about their own village and the wider world through projects on countries such as, India, Hawaii, Africa, South America and Scotland. Visitors have been invited in to talk about their work and connection to the locality; a vet and a paramedic. Children have been taken on outings to the local supermarket and walks around the village, in particular to the duck pond which is very well known in the area. Children enjoy the outdoors, the fresh air and the opportunity to exercise. Children are confident and at ease in the setting. They are able to sustain their concentration and complete tasks. They help each other particularly when they are negotiating the stairs; holding hands and making sure they are safe. Children are spoken to with respect

and show they are keen learners by asking questions. Children are supported by staff and have developed a positive self-image. They are learning right from wrong and the consequences of their actions. Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are becoming aware that they have similarities and differences and value each other's abilities. There are good resources on site reflecting equal opportunities, particularly books and dressing-up clothes, which are used frequently. Staff have identified the additional resources that they need to benefit the children. Boys and girls have equal access to equipment and any discriminatory remarks are challenged. Children take part in festival activities, topic work and the group has links with outside organisations who come in and talk with the children, such as, the fire service and police force. Children are treated with kindness and sensitivity. Children are reminded from time to time to be kind and considerate.

Children who need additional support are welcomed and included in all activities. Adaptations are made if required and close working links are established with the area special needs coordinator. Staff work in unison with parents and progress is monitored to achieve good results. Staff have a working knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Children behave well, respecting each other and instructions from the staff members. Staff members understand the behaviour management policy and this ensures that they deal with the children in a consistent manner for all ages. Words such as 'naughty' are avoided and praise is given freely to acknowledge kindness and courtesy. Children know their boundaries and are given clear messages, such as, 'please don't snatch' when a child refused to share. Rules are simple to avoid any confusion. Staff members behave well to give children good role models to follow.

Parents are made welcome and information is freely available to them. Staff spend time giving feedback to parents, listening to their views and making note of any concerns they may have. They come into the room and can spend as much time as they need to settle their children. There is a consistent approach to the children's care and staff take time to get to know the family and the needs of the children.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is good. Parents receive verbal and written reports regularly. Clear written information about the curriculum and the six areas of learning is provided for them. Information regarding children's prior learning is sought from parents to enable staff to plan activities to capture the children's interests. Opportunities are created for staff and parents to meet. They discuss the children's progress and how parents can become involved with their child's learning and development. Key workers are in place to liaise closely with the families. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the provision and would recommend 'the friendliness, the progress their children are making and the organisation' to other parents.

Children are considerate and show concern for their friends. They are learning right from wrong and realise the consequences of their actions. They are able to leave their parents with confidence and have formed good relationships with the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The manager has been in place for 14 years. She is very experienced, motivated and enthusiastic about her work. She wants the best for the children and the staff. She is embarking on a degree course to further her knowledge and understanding of child care. She has a current first aid certificate. Children benefit from the commitment of the manager to improving the standards at the pre-school.

Staff members work well as a team. They have a number of qualified staff and are committed to further training. They share their knowledge and understanding of childcare with each other. The group has a robust recruitment policy ensuring that children are safeguarded. The management team is strong and has a vision of where development opportunities lie. Children have key workers who understand their individual needs. Staffing ratios are maintained to ensure children are well supervised and receive individual attention. New members of staff are given thorough induction training to ensure they understand the group's policies and how the children should be treated.

Children and parents benefit from a range of policies and procedures implemented by the staff. Parents can access information about the group through posters on the notice boards, talking with the staff and newsletters. Records are in order and kept confidential, however the daily register does not reflect the times of arrival and departure of the children accurately. It is important to be able to identify when a child is attending the setting. The group's operational plan is actively used and is reviewed to update policies.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager has a clear aim which is 'to meet the aims of the Foundation Stage, allowing the children to reach their full potential'. Staff meetings take place to discuss the curriculum and define individual roles and responsibilities and minutes are taken. Strong links are fostered with outside agencies and the local school. The manager regularly monitors and evaluate the quality of the nursery education on offer. The team meet each day before the session begins to discuss events and this assists their delivery of the stepping stones. They identify their own strengths and weaknesses and put together action plans with timescales to address the issues.

Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, two recommendations were set regarding care practice. Staff were required to extend the knowledge of child protection issues. Since the inspection, further training has been completed and staff are now more confident about the referral process and the signs and symptoms of abuse. This benefits the children as staff are more assured about the procedure. It was also recommended that the complaints procedure was updated. This has been completed and now contains the latest guidelines. This procedure ensures that parents and staff can swiftly resolve any concerns regarding the children.

The group also had two recommendations regarding nursery education. They were required to continue to develop links to the stepping stones and early learning goals within planning and assessment. Further work has been completed on the planning and this improvement assists staff in the teaching of the Foundation Stage. It was also required that staff's confidence and skill in using everyday activities to maximise opportunities that promote children's development be improved. Again further training has been completed and the core activities, such as, sand,

water and role play features in the planning. These changes benefit the children's learning and progress through the stepping stones.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that 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.

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 good.

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):

- ensure that the daily register is time accurate; reflecting the times of arrival and departure of children and staff
- develop strategies to expand children's opportunities to play outside; using larger pieces of equipment to climb, jump and run (this also applies to Nursery Education).

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):

- extend children's independent use of books; furthering their enjoyment of stories, the recognition of letters, the understanding that words carry meaning and foster their attempts to form letters and shapes
- develop the use of numbers in everyday activities; sharing, counting with their fingers, recognising numbers and attempting to write them down.

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