

Tweenies Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Mandy Mooney

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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

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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 satisfactory. 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?

Tweenies Pre-school has been operating since 1987. The present owner has been running the group since 1998.

The pre-school is located in Roberts Hall, which is situated to the rear of Christ Church in the Broadway, Bexleyheath. The pre-school is well established and serves the local community.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday between the hours of 09.30 and 12.00 and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 until 15:00, during school term times.

There are currently 60 children on roll. This includes 34 children who receive nursery education funding. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

Ten members of staff work with the children, of whom, over half hold an appropriate childcare qualification.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to an appropriately clean and hygienic environment and steps are in place to minimise the risk of infection. Hygiene procedures include regular cleaning of the setting, checking toilets throughout the day and wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray before children sit down to eat. Although opportunities for children to be involved in this are often missed. Children are helped to learn about the importance of personal hygiene as staff encourage them to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Soap and paper towels are readily available to encourage hand washing and tissues are located at low level to encourage children to wipe their own noses.

Appropriate steps are in place to reduce the spread of infection. In the event of a child becoming unwell, parents are contacted to collect children and they are excluded from the setting until well. In administering medication to children, the required details and consents are obtained and staff ensure good practice of parents signing medication records once medication has been administered. Although the required information is recorded for accidents, several entries are recorded on each page and some entries include other children's names. This does not ensure confidentiality.

There is a small outdoor play space available and children have daily opportunities to take part in physical play and get fresh air. This contributes to children having a healthy lifestyle. Although children demonstrate appropriate spatial awareness and enjoy riding round on bikes and group play with the large parachute, opportunities to enhance physical development and to offer challenge are limited and planning in this area is often haphazard and not reflective of what is recorded in planning.

Children benefit as the setting offers a good range of healthy and nutritious snacks, such as a variety of fresh fruit and milk and water to drink. They also have the option of bringing in their own drink, which are not always completely healthy and can contain high levels of sugar. Children are fed in line with parents' wishes. Staff ensure they are well informed of children's dietary requirements by liaising with parents and information is shared amongst the staff team and restrictions recorded and displayed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a suitably safe and secure environment. The premises are shared with others groups, however the main hall used for play is secured once the children have arrived, as is the main front door. This means unwanted visitors cannot access the group and children cannot leave unsupervised. The toilets are also shared with other users, however, staff are vigilant about the children's safety as they limit the number of children going to the toilet to three at any one time and give close supervision at all time, so their safety is secured.

Staff make parents and children feel welcome in the morning as they greet them cheerfully at the door. Children play with a suitable range of age appropriate and safe toys. These are stored in a walk in cupboard. Children are able to move around the room making choices about what they want to do because the room is arranged into different areas of learning. Staff ensure

toys and resources are safe before the children arrive and regular washing of these ensures they are adequately clean.

Children are kept safe because staff implement some effective safety systems. This includes completing a daily safety check before the children arrive, having an effective dropping and collection policy which records only named persons can collect the child and by ensuring appropriate supervision is afforded at all times. Appropriate fire safety systems are in place, such as having a fire blanket in the kitchen which is accessible, practising the fire evacuation drill on a regular basis and ensuring fire exits are clear. Written health and safety policies underpin practices, these include, a lost child policy and an uncollected child policy. Children learn about the importance of safety when playing because the routine enables them to take responsibility for tidying up at the end of the session and children are reminded to play with toys appropriately so they do not hurt themselves or others, although this practice is not consistent amongst all staff.

Children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded. There is a child protection policy in place and this records the procedure to follow if an allegation of abuse is made. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their responsibility to protect children. However, all staff are not completely clear about the procedure to follow if the manager is absent. This means that there is a possibility of a delay in seeking appropriate advice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happy and confidently separate from their parents. Those who find separation difficult are reassured by staff and quickly settle. Children have access to a variety of play experiences to meet their all round developmental needs and to reflect the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, this is not true of the information provided on the Birth to three matters framework. Children take part in a variety of activities and opportunities that provide appropriate stimulation and to help them progress, such as, negotiating roles in the hairdressers and taking turns on the computer. However, opportunities for children to take part in more challenging physical play are not provided. Staff report they vary the activities according to who is present on the particular day, although this not reflected on the planning sheet. Staff give some thought to the Birth to three framework when planning, however, the benefits to the younger children are not fully evident.

Key workers are responsible for settling in new children and developing a caring relationship outside the family home. As a result, children build positive relationships and separation from parents is positive. Key workers are also responsible for liaising with parents to share information about children's developmental progress. Children are confident, initiating conversations with peers and staff, they freely approach staff for help or assistance or just to tell them what they have been doing. Staff are responsive to their needs and interaction is warm.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy their time in the setting and staff know the children well and can identify that children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Most staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, however, not all staff are involved in the planning of activities and opportunities and this means they do not have an active role in planning the curriculum for the children. As a result, the observations completed are only used to write children's progress reports and not

consistently used to influence planning. Children spend most of their time in the main hall, where activities are attractively laid out on tables and on the floor. The routine is organised so that free play is the main activity in the first part of the session and more structured small group work in the second part, where children are encouraged to work together and staff enable children to develop their early social skills, such as, turn taking and sharing. Grouping of the children sometimes puts too much emphasis on the age of the children, as opposed to the stage of the children and as a result children miss out on opportunities to take part in more challenging activities.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered as children are settled and secure in the setting. They show good levels of confidence and self esteem and show a sense of belonging as they make independent choices about their play. Children ask to go to the toilet and although they are supervised to get there, for safety reasons, most are able to see to their toileting needs independently. Children feel safe and have developed a sense of trust as they have formed positive relationships with adults, greeting them as they walk in the room, or approaching adults to ask them what they are doing. Children are developing nice relationships with each other and older children show a sense of responsibility in caring for the younger ones.

Children appropriately use a range of resources to write for a variety of purposes, these include pencils and pens and various paper on the literacy table, although this area is not always well supported by staff. The home corner is adapted to meet the current theme, currently a hairdressers, where they arrange appointments and record them in the appointment book. Many children can recognise their own name on cards at snack time and at the literacy table, however, opportunities for them to practise writing their own names are too few because staff generally do this for them. Children chat to each other whilst they sit at the literacy table and they use their language well in role play. They negotiate their play and agree roles. Children have opportunities to look at books as they participate in story sessions during the day. Books are readily available in the book area and children frequently look at books independently and know the pages turn from left to right and can be seen reading to each other.

Children show understanding of mathematical concepts, such as number and comparison. Children's mathematical language is developing appropriately, for example, when playing maths games, many understand who has the most points. Some older three-year-olds and four-year-olds are able to count to 10 and beyond, and also count objects accurately, demonstrating one-to-one correspondence. Some children are able to identify numbers from the domino games and numbers on the wall. Younger children show awareness of number, talking about their age and can count to at least five. They have some opportunities to consolidate their learning during the activities, depending on which member of staff is leading the group. For example, when counting how many children are at the table at snack time and counting down at song time to '10 in the bed'.

Children's awareness of themselves and each other is reinforced because they take part in activities which extend their knowledge of different festivals and cultures. Children's home lives are acknowledged and this helps children feel valued as they talk about what they do at home. Their knowledge of the local community is reinforced somewhat through occasional visits into the community, such as, a recent trip to the local pet shop. They have some opportunities to use and learn about information technology as they have daily use of a computer, where they confidently use the age appropriate programmes independently. Children learn about looking after living things as they grow flowers and look at creatures, for example, caterpillars.

Children have daily opportunities to take part in large physical play. They develop their spatial awareness as they move around the room confidently, whilst negotiating furniture and others. Children enjoy taking part in large group games, such as the parachute game, where they understand simple concepts, such, go faster, up and down and are able to follow these instructions. However, the opportunities offered to children to take part in more challenging large physical play are limited. They have opportunities to get fresh air in the small outdoor area on a daily basis, however, generally planning in this area is insufficient. Fine motor skills are developing appropriately as children have access to a range of equipment including building blocks and play dough to manipulate and a variety of mark making media.

Children use their imagination well in role play and small world play. They play together and negotiate roles and enjoy dressing up, whilst dressing up and making good use of the hall to create their scenes. They are very expressive as they mimic the animal sounds in small world play. Opportunities for children to be freely expressive in art and craft activities are sufficient and children readily approach the art table and independently attempt to paint and create their work. Children know and sing along to familiar rhymes and songs and follow actions at large group time. Songs include, 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' and 'The wheels on the bus'. However, often decisions about what song will be sung are made by staff, this means children miss out on the opportunity to choose.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are appropriately met. Staff get to know the children and their families through the use of the key worker system. Children take part in some planned activities to help them learn about themselves and others. For example, through celebrating different cultural festivals, such as, Chinese New Year and Easter and also through spontaneous opportunities, such as informal chats with their peers and staff about what they did at home at the weekend. They have access to a range of resources to reflect different roles in the community, such as, having a hairdressers as the current theme in the home corner. However, resources and visual depiction of people in the community and from the wider world generally are some what limited. Children gain a sense of value from seeing photographs of themselves and some of their work displayed on the notice board, although this is not well thought out or organised. Gender stereotyping is minimised in the setting as toys are suitable for all children and as they have equal access, children make independent choices of what they would like to play with.

The setting ensures all children and families are welcomed into the setting and supports children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Staff make observations of children's development and any concerns identified are shared with parents and external support is sought. There is a named special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in place, who has attended training in this area and who works closely with the area SENCO in the Local Authority to best meet the needs of children and help them progress in the setting. However, other staff have not attended training in this area recently and tend to rely on the manager's knowledge.

Staff provide a positive role model for the children and as a result children behave well. Staff greet parents in a friendly way and this helps children feel secure. Staff manage children's behaviour in a fair and consistent way, strategies include diverting children from unwanted behaviour and explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable. Children are encouraged to have appropriate manners. They respond well to reminders from staff to say 'please' and 'thank you' and good behaviour is acknowledged with praise.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident and show good levels of self esteem. Children talk about their home life and they have been doing with their families and they are confident in sharing their feelings. Children show caring attitudes towards others in the group and develop caring attitudes through role play. Children relate well with others, as positive relationships are forming. Children have also developed positive relationships with adults in the room, greeting and sharing information or thoughts. Staff know the children well as the setting liaises with families to find out about the child and their individual everyday needs.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff continue to develop working relationships with parents through use of the key worker system and daily conversations. Parents are given some information about the setting to help them know how the routine/curriculum is organised, this include a parents' notice board, regular newsletters and information displayed about the current theme. However, because many parents do not come into the main hall where the notice board is located, this means that many do not read the information and as a result are not aware of some information, such as Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Parents have insufficient opportunities to be actively involved in their child's learning because they are not involved in setting next steps for their child's learning and this means it is not a two way process between staff and parents. Several parents were spoken to during the inspection and all commented on how happy they are with the provision. Comments include "happy with the information received about child's progress" and " staff are friendly and approachable". One weakness identified is that parents are not given information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and they are not involved in setting targets to help their child move in to the next stage of learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Qualification requirements are well met because over half of the staff are appropriately qualified in childcare. Most staff have a first aid qualification and opportunities for further training are in place. Staff demonstrate an awareness of their responsibility to promote children's welfare and this is evident as staff who are unvetted are not left unsupervised with children.

There is an appropriate procedure in place to ensure those who work with the children are suitable. Children are sufficiently safeguarded as unvetted persons are not left unsupervised with the children. All staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities and this means the sessions are well organised, however, on occasions, mainly in the first part of the session, some staff put too much emphasis on domestic chores and tend to hover round and this takes them away from being directly with the children. Although this does improve in the latter part of the session, where staff organise small group games and sit with the children encouraging their contribution.

The setting complies with registration conditions as the certificate is displayed, in line with regulations. Adult:child ratios are adhered to. However, the record of attendance is not clearly recorded and does not reflect the actual times of arrival and departure of children and adult attendance is only recorded as total number on a wipe clean board with no dates recorded. This means it is not apparent what day the information relates to and that this could not be referred to accurately in the future, if required. All required records are in place and most are recorded and stored in a confidential way, with the exception of the accident record, where a weakness is identified.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager has a hands on approach to leading the group and works directly with the children and this enables her to observe practices on a daily basis. However, weaknesses are apparent several areas of the nursery education curriculum and this means the systems to monitor the effective of this are mostly ineffective. The setting works with an advisory teacher to improve the provision for the children and the manager has made some improvement in the provision since the last inspection, however, acknowledge that some weaknesses still remain. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Five recommendations were raised for care at the last inspection in May 2004. The provider was asked to review the organisation and content of the last part of the session when all the children are together, in order to ensure the children's needs are appropriately met. The organisation of the session has now been changed and this means that smaller group activities go on at this time, which is well controlled and means children get more out of the session. To ensure staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities and are able to manage activities effectively without direction. Roles and responsibilities are now designated and displayed and this means the sessions run smoothly and staff take more responsibility for the different areas of work. To look into the possibility of utilising the outdoor area to provide children with opportunities for outdoor play. Children now have use of a small outdoor area, which enables them to take part in some activities and to get fresh air. However, the space is very restrictive and the provider has taken steps to further develop this by fundraising to use a larger part of the space. To develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, especially in the whole group part of the session. Staff manage children's behaviour in a consistent and positive way and this contributes to them behaving well. Staff have had a training session on behaviour management and the policy relating to this has been updated accordingly. To review and update policies and procedures, particularly in the areas of complaints and child protection. All policies and have been reviewed and updated since the last inspection and are reflective of current guidance and regulations. This contributes to the safe management of the provision.

Three actions were agreed for nursery education. To integrate planning and assessment to ensure that clear learning intentions are identified and the records of children's progress are used to inform planning and build on what children already know. Some improvement has been made, for example, learning intentions are now thought out. Although progress records are kept and these are based on the observations made by staff, these are not consistently used to influence planning and a weakness remains in setting the next steps as this is still not being completed. To consolidate staffs' knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals by involving them more in planning, in three areas in particular. Staff demonstrate varying levels of competence in their knowledge of the early learning goals and because not all staff are involved in the planning of activities, this means they are not consolidating their knowledge by putting it into practice and as a result children do not get full benefit from the whole staff group contribution. To review the organisation of sessions and the management of time to ensure that activities are reflective of children's stage of learning, to improve concentration and listening skills and behaviour in large groups. The sessions have been reviewed and include a period of free play and then later some more structured small group work, which helps children sit down and take turns, concentrate and listen to staff instructions. This contributes to them developing appropriate early social skills. Children's behaviour is generally good overall and staff are consistent in their approach to this and use effective strategies which children understand and respond to.

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 satisfactory. 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 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):

- implement a clear system for recording the daily attendance of staff and children, to include the actual times of arrival and departure
- ensure all adults working with the children are completely clear about the procedures for dealing with child protection issues
- extend the opportunities for large physical play to provide more challenge for the older and more able children (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure all records are recorded in a confidential way

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):

- further develop the system for assessing children's learning to include next steps
- review the use of observations to ensure they are used to influence future planning
- review and improve the evaluation of the curriculum offered to children and use this to improve future activities and opportunities
- review and improve the information given to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to be actively involved in their child's learning
- improve the management system for monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education provision

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