

# Tiny Tows Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	219966
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachael Mankiewicz

<b>Setting Address</b>	Islington Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 6AU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Tiny Tows Pre-School
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care
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## 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](http://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?

Tiny Tows Pre-School has been in operation at Towcester Infants School for approximately 12 years. The group was previously situated at other premises in the town. It operates from one classroom at the school and shares toilet facilities with some of the school children. The children can also use other facilities in the school including indoor and outdoor areas. The pre-school serves the local area and most of the children move on to attend the infants school.

There are currently 49 children on roll. This includes 41 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The staff have knowledge and experience to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week with two sessions a day during term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00.

Nine members of staff work with the children. Three of the staff have Level 3 qualifications in early years care and two have training at Level 2. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local education authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a warm, comfortable and child-friendly environment. The premises, toys and equipment children use are maintained in a satisfactory state of cleanliness. Independent personal care and good hygiene practices are encouraged as children are able to access the sink in the playroom. Older children are fully aware that they are helping to prevent the spread of infection as they talk about germs on their hands when they come in from digging in the garden and picking up 'mini-beasts'. Staff escort children to the shared toilet area. These practices sustain good levels of hygiene and help to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have up to date knowledge of first aid in the event of any accident. Children who have accidents or become sick whilst attending the playgroup are cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by their parents and carers.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet to promote their growth and development as they enjoy a range of nutritious snacks. They independently access fruit, vegetables and savoury snacks and pour their own water or milk. Children express their enjoyment as they help themselves to food. They show preferences and talk about flavours and textures and this is extended as they try different foods when taste testing and when celebrating different festivals. Older children know that they need to access water regularly to remain hydrated and they eagerly access the jug of water and beakers when they come in from outside.

Children have some good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They have daily opportunities to do exercise through the use of apparatus indoors in the school hall or through playing outside during the free-flow session or as a large group activity. Children enjoy the benefit of fresh air to promote their development as they walk around the local environment including trips to the local supermarket. However, access to a choice of activities to develop their large muscles is limited due to the lack of space and because the hall and playground are shared areas. When available, children run, jump, climb and use large and small equipment to develop control over their bodies. Inside the building children move spontaneously and with confidence in the well-organised space. Quieter activities take place spontaneously indoors and outside. For example, children can relax and enjoy looking at a book. They show increasing skill in their use of small equipment through construction activities and using tools as they play with dough.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe as a result of the adults' excellent awareness of health and safety and because all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of accidents. Their safety is further enhanced as extensive risk assessments have been completed and cover all areas of the building, the outdoor play areas as well as when taking children on outings. For example, the staff and management ensure that furniture and equipment, in particular the large apparatus, are of suitable design and condition, well-maintained and conform to safety standards. The staff's good understanding of safety allows children access to activities that offer variety and challenge within safe limits such as climbing and balancing on the static equipment or playing with water. The premises are secure and children are unable to leave unsupervised. The staff: child ratios are maintained well during the free-flow times in the session. The person in charge continuously

adjusts the deployment of staff to ensure that children are well supervised at all times. Staff and parents implement well the arrival and collection procedures that prevent unknown visitors entering the setting. Children learn about safety and begin to take personal responsibility for their safety. High quality equipment and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development are easily accessed by the children. They safely and deftly manipulate tools and implements as they use playdough and do cooking activities. Their good hand/eye coordination is seen as they responsibly carry and safely use scissors and other craft tools in many activities. Children learn about road safety as an activity and transfer their knowledge as they walk around the local environment. They are reminded about keeping themselves safe and safe adults when they have visits from the local police, the nurse and the school crossing patrol.

Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines and up to date training. Their safety and welfare is further enhanced by the excellent security of the premises and daily checks of all equipment. Children are learning how to protect themselves from possible danger as they practise emergency evacuation procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are settled and enjoy their time in the company of friends and adults at the setting. They are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided and benefit from the care and encouragement of knowledgeable and experienced staff in the welcoming learning environment. Children's needs are met through effective organisation and planning for the progress of all children by staff who have good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are skilled at encouraging children to extend their experiences and at listening and talking with them. Children's self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child's needs and offer appropriate support and encouragement. This helps the children develop positive relationships. Children listen and communicate well with each other and with the adults which enables them to contribute to the social activities in the setting. They begin to develop their independence and learn to play in groups as they participate in a range of interesting activities. For example, they play together harmoniously in the home corner and then move on to play with construction materials which helps them to develop hand/eye coordination.

Children explore a variety of interesting materials which stimulate their curiosity. For example, they eagerly develop their senses as they create imaginative animals and make familiar shapes with playdough. Children continue to use their imaginations well and with enthusiasm as they take part in role play. They are encouraged to explore and express themselves in a wide range of art and craft activities and music. Children respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings where appropriate as they talk about their busy weekends and new friends. Their perseverance to complete activities and their confidence to share feelings develops as they play.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Recent changes to the planning and assessment cycle have helped staff to plan for individual children along with adapting activities appropriately. Staff make effective use of time and resources to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. They effectively support children in a mixture of adult and

child-initiated play. Children are encouraged to make the most of their experiences by the staff's careful consideration of what the child might be able to learn. This is supported through good questioning by the knowledgeable key worker staff. Systems for planning the individual children's progress are being developed as challenge and individual targets are highlighted. Information gained from the parents both verbally and in comments in weekly diaries is used to inform planning. Parents are advised how they can extend their children's learning at home ensuring that everyone is working co-operatively for the benefit of the child.

Children participate enthusiastically in the planned activities on offer and generally take the initiative to develop their play in other ways although they are sometimes restrained by routines and the limitations of space. For example, they enthusiastically access paper and crayons in the graphics area which develops their hand/eye coordination but are unable to choose an activity to develop their large muscles. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials and discover why things happen and how they work. For example, they show pride in making a successful marble run. They experience, with dexterity, a range of different tools and implements, including cookery and playdough tools. Information technology is developed through good access to the computer where they practise their mouse skills and consolidate other learning such as colour and shape matching. They choose to use simple working technology such as tills, phones and cameras to support their learning. Role play opportunities allow them to imitate the adult roles of shop keepers and bus drivers amongst many others. Creative and imaginative skills are being promoted with a good range of art resources and the children take pride in their paintings and collages.

Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. They begin to understand why their hearts pump their blood around more quickly as they exercise. Children find out about the environment as they hunt for 'mini-beasts'. Daily discussions about the weather help children learn about the climate and the seasons. They begin to explore the wider world through visits to the supermarket, library and outings further afield. Children look at holiday destinations and take part in the celebration of festivals.

Children count confidently and show increasing skill in recognising and using numbers to support their play. They compare two numbers as they count during number games and sorting opportunities. Older children are beginning to develop the use of mathematical ideas to solve problems in planned activities and by participating in many day to day domestic routines. For example, they work out how many more sections of the construction kit to make it as high as the member of staff's head. Children recognise numerals and begin to know what they mean and how they are used. For example, they find their ages on the scrap paper lists and spot numbers of items in the shared story. Their language skills are good, they show awareness of the listener, and negotiate well within their play. They listen with enjoyment to stories and respond to simple instructions. Reading skills are developing, as they recognise their own name, the names of friends and labels around the setting. Children know how books work and handle them with care. They understand that print has meaning and make marks freely throughout their activities. For example, they use their emerging writing skills for real purpose as they write their names on their drawings.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good understanding of the values and needs of others as they participate in a wide variety of activities which promote their understanding of society and

increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. They celebrate festivals and national days and enjoy meeting people around the town or visitors to the setting. Older children are aware of their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in the activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves. For example, older children work well together as a team in construction activities and assist their friends in putting on their aprons and joining in artwork. Children behave very well as they are made aware of what is appropriate behaviour. They respond well to the consistent boundaries set them and the encouragement to behave well given by the caring staff who act as good role models. Children show concern for each other when their friends are upset. Older children are beginning to take responsibility for their own behaviour because staff give them clear explanations and help them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. They begin to negotiate when there is a problem and respect each other as they play and share. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children and parents are appreciated and valued as individuals by the welcoming staff who ensure that children are settled and that their needs are met. The very good levels of support ensure that all children feel included in the pre-school and that they receive individual attention. Children gain confidence and self-assurance through making choices about activities and moving around the room interacting with staff and other children. The opportunity to choose between playing inside or outside when weather permits benefits the children. However, the opportunities to develop their physical skills are limited because of the lack of space and because available space is shared. There is good access to further play resources indoors in the creative, graphics and construction areas. Children are able to develop independence in other ways. For example, they access the hand washing area for themselves and help tidy up at times during the session.

The children's well-being at the nursery is enhanced by the good partnership with parents. Written agreements with parents are clear and detailed. Parents are informed about how the setting operates and the activities provided through a starter pack, written notices, newsletters and displays and information about the care of the children. However, the information about how to make complaint to the regulatory authority is not clear which means that parents are not fully informed to enable all to work together to support the children's well-being. Staff obtain information about the children's needs in an 'All About Me' document, particularly regarding words used for personal care, which helps ensure consistency of care. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding learning difficulties and disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. The needs of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and met sensitively. Good information sharing on a daily basis is seen as important, including verbal information sharing and written exchange of records after meetings with keyworkers. Parents are able to easily access the policies and procedures. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in the running of the setting as members of the management committee. Parents and carers are able to help children settle in to the group and some help by offering their time and skills. Children enjoy the involvement of their parents and other adults and this contributes to their sense of assurance and belonging.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is very good. This contributes greatly to the children's progress in the pre-school. Parents receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage in general and specifically about their own children. Colourful wall displays including photographs and descriptions show how children are learning through play. Key workers inform all parents about their children's progress towards the early learning goals and seek their views. Comments made by parents about achievements

of their children are used to plan the next stages in learning. Parents are encouraged to extend their children's learning at home and suggestions are made daily as the children are collected, in newsletters and in weekly diaries. Children benefit from parents being made fully aware of their child's progress and achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The good quality of care and education offered to the children is based on effective organisation throughout the setting. The leadership and management of the nursery education for funded children is good.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space and resources which ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities and their varying needs can be met. They move freely from one activity to another, with little encouragement and this ensures children are occupied and happy throughout the session. Children's welfare is promoted effectively because many of the staff are qualified and experienced in early years care to level three and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff extend their own professional development through access to training and local short courses. The management team are developing a formal appraisal system to ensure children are cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience. The recruitment and vetting procedures are sound and the procedures to ensure continued suitability of staff are being developed to help ensure children are well protected. The care and education of the children is encouraged by the very good staff to child ratios. Children benefit from the good supervision and sensitive interaction. All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place to ensure that the care of children is met. The operational plan, including policies and procedures, is reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team and the management committee work very well together and are committed to the continuous improvement and development of the setting. Staff have systems in place to discuss and reflect on their practice and evaluate the provision of nursery education in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and ensure children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff positively take advice from other professionals. Children's individual needs are continuously assessed and discussed by the child's keyworker and parents. Staff support and encourage children very well during activities while still allowing them time and space to initiate their own learning. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the provision was asked to look at elements of the operational plan and the policies and procedures of the group. These have been reviewed in line with recent changes to guidance in the case of the child protection policy. The overall changes help ensure that the well-being and welfare of children is not compromised.

At the last inspection of the nursery education, the provision was asked to continue to develop planning for children's next steps in learning by using the effective system of observation and assessment of children's progress, plus information from parents. Work has been done on the planning and assessment cycle by recent changes in staff and incorporating updates in the curriculum guidance. A further recommendation is made to consolidate this as part of this inspection to help ensure children are making good progress.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 parents are made aware of recent changes to the complaints procedures and recording systems
- increase the opportunities for children to access further resources to encourage them to initiate their own play in the area of physical development (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure the staff appraisal system allows staff strengths and weakness' to be identified and includes procedures to ensure continued suitability of staff.

#### **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):

- consolidate use of the framework which informs the assessment and planning cycle to ensure that all children make progress.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)