

Tiny Toes Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511406
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Kim Wailing
Setting Address	Leverstock Green School, Green Lane, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4SA
Telephone number	01442 233275
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Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Tiny Toes is one of 111 nurseries run by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited. It opened in 1991 and operates from a single storey building within the grounds of Leverstock Green Primary School, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 54 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 85 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Tiny Toes Nursery was awarded Hertfordshire Quality Standards in 2004.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted because staff members follow good hygiene routines which prevent the spread of infection. For example, as part of the daily routine staff members supervise children's hand washing and regularly wash their own hands. In addition, helpful notices in the toilet areas remind children about the importance of using soap and rubbing their hands together when hand washing. Staff have a good understanding of how to meet the individual health needs of children and systems are in place to support children with specific conditions such as asthma and severe food allergies. All permanent staff members hold appropriate first aid qualifications. As a result, children's health is safeguarded.

Children are offered foods that they enjoy. This includes a hot lunchtime meal. Meal times are relaxed and emphasis is placed on children's independence skills. For example, older children set the lunchtime tables, a task that they greatly enjoy. Staff who work with infants under two follow children's individual feeding routines. Bottle feeds are unhurried and relaxed. As a result, children develop good appetites and are well nourished. In addition, drinking water is freely available for children to be able to satisfy their immediate thirst.

Children's physical development is satisfactorily promoted. Children use the nursery garden on a daily basis throughout the year. Planning shows that indoor activities, such as music sessions are offered alongside a weekly visit from a peripatetic dance company 'Little Mites' so that children can build on their coordination skills. In addition, there is a range of simple percussion instruments and art and craft tools that foster children's fine motor skills.

The daily routine is well structured. Children are offered a balance of active and quieter activities, such as small group story sessions. Toddlers, and some older children, have the opportunity to take an afternoon nap so that energy levels are refreshed. Infants rest and sleep according to their individual needs. These are discussed with parents and form part of the child's individual care plan.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is given a high priority and systems to ensure children are safe are good. Staff use a comprehensive range of documentation, from information about safeguarding children to risk assessment procedures. This helps them to create a safe environment which successfully promotes children's development. Features, such as an electronic attendance register and entry and exit key pads further enhance children's safety.

The nursery is clean and well-maintained. However, there is no procedure to monitor the temperature in the disabled toilet, which is used as a nappy changing area for older toddlers, to ensure children's comfort. Staff are vigilant and very good staff deployment mean that children are kept in sight at all times. Children are encouraged to keep themselves and others safe by being involved to routine tasks such as helping to sweep spilt sand. Alongside this, simple rules, such as not running indoors, are used which children follow and remind others to follow.

Children use age-appropriate furniture, toys and resources which are in excellent condition. The storage of toys, in particular, has been planned very well which means that children can

access favourite toys and reach art and craft equipment easily. Staff working with children under two have carefully collected a selection of natural materials to promote sensory play which children can use safely. Overall, good use of space means that children of all ages can move around the nursery safely.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy in a supportive and caring environment. They quickly settle into the well-organised daily routine. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and take part in a range of age-appropriate activities. Infants under two play contentedly. They have use of a wide range of bright and colourful toys and an interesting collection of natural materials to enhance their learning. They respond positively to activities as they receive good adult guidance and extra support if it is needed. Staff implement all aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively. This is supported by relevant assessment and planning which is conscientiously undertaken and followed by all staff. Children are offered a good balance of experiences both indoor and out. This is facilitated by the organisation of the nursery which is attractively arranged and welcoming. Indoor toys and resources are stored in low-level units so that children can make choices and initiate their own play. Consequently, children make good progress.

Children play together well, particularly when using the impressive indoor sandpit, and happily share resources. Firm friendships are in evidence. Children are encouraged to be polite to others and can regularly be heard saying 'please' and 'thank you'. These social skills are consistently fostered and praised by all staff members who have a sound understanding of how to support children's social and emotional development. As a result, children are settled and thrive.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are offered a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences, which include all areas of learning. Staff scaffold learning by following children's interests and use these as a starting point to develop themes. For example, on the second day of inspection children used role play resources to dramatise a visit to the opticians. This leads to children making their own eye patches which later spontaneously evolved into a game of pirates. Throughout this activity sequence children worked collaboratively together with great enthusiasm, displaying both perseverance and concentration. Consequently new skills, facts and information, such as why some people wear glasses and others not, were taught in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Older children quickly settle and are busy throughout the day. They receive individual adult support as well as opportunities to work as part of a group and initiate their own play. Children's play is valued and facilitated. Consequently, children create elaborate games which are rewarding and satisfying to them. Staff sensitively support children's learning and use every opportunity to extend children's knowledge and understanding. For example, children are encouraged to use problem solving skills when counting the numbers plates needed when setting the lunchtime tables. Children were asked not only to work out how many plates were required but also how many unused plates needed to be returned to the kitchen, a challenge which children relished and correctly calculated.

The nursery has an exciting range of resources that effectively support all areas of learning. Areas, such as exploration and discovery play and knowledge and understanding of the world,

in particular, are imaginatively resourced. Equal weighting is given to indoor and outdoor activities which help children make links in their learning. Staff members adapt most activities to meet children's individual learning needs. However, some activities to promote children's physical development do not offer sufficient challenge for older children. Teaching and learning in areas such as communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is secure. Overall children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued. The nursery successfully works with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the setting. As a result, children develop a sense of belonging which is enhanced by the key worker system, in which each child is allocated a main carer. Good systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including the use of local authority and health agencies.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are able to feel a good sense of belonging work harmoniously with others and make choices and decisions. These all contribute to the children developing good self-esteem and respect for others. The nursery ensure that they know all children well and that they are provided with equality of opportunity. Constant and effective monitoring of childcare practice ensures that there is no bias in relation to gender race or disability. The nursery is guided by an approach linked to 'Our World' which is followed by all nurseries in the nursery chain. This pledges a commitment to instil in each child a respect for all people as well as the environment.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good.

Ample information about nursery education and current topics is made available for parents. This includes parent workshop session which are used to explain the principles that underpin nursery practice. In addition, regular newsletters update parents about future events. Parents have informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress as well as receiving an informative end of placement report.

Overall the nursery works effectively with parents, which significantly contributes to the children's well-being. For example, infants under two settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure they follow their home routines. In addition, annual questionnaires, seeking parents' views about the services that the nursery offers, are conducted and parents' responses are taken into account when monitoring services. Time, attention and helpful 'top tips' information cards are given to visiting prospective parents. This is combined with a detailed prospectus which clearly outlines the services that the nursery offers which helps them reach an informed decision when considering childcare options.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are very well cared for because of the excellent organisation of the nursery. The setting has a clear sense of purpose and direction. For example, outstanding systems are in place to implement change, monitor and evaluate practice. This combined with excellent liaison between the nurseries, the area manager, corporate head office and the head of school in which the nursery is located ensure that any problems are quickly resolved and effective measures are

put in place to safeguard children. For example, the recent building work to establish a children's centre adjacent to the nursery is being well-managed and monitored so that the impact on children is minimalised. All documentation that supports the care and learning of children is in place and available for scrutiny. Deputising procedures are effective and excellent use is made of talented senior staff members who act as mentors to new staff members.

Recruitment procedures are robust which means that staff looking after children are well suited and qualified. Members of the staff, many being long serving, work as a cohesive team. They attend staff meetings to ensure that nursery objectives are shared and information from training is disseminated. Annual staff appraisals take place which identify training needs to further professional development. This is supported by high quality training, through in-service training sessions, the provision of conference calling provision and by attendance at conferences. Alongside this, the manager has an 'open door' policy so that staff can discuss aspects of their practice. As a result, staff feel valued, are generous with their time and skills and endeavours to provide a happy caring environment for children.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding.

The manager is well-qualified and experienced. She has a comprehensive understanding of the principles that underpin nursery education and ably leads the nursery team. Her infectious enthusiasm and commitment to provide a consistently high standard of care and nursery education is evident in both the ethos of the nursery and in the excellent relationships she has built with staff, children and their families. She is proactive and has taken advantage of opportunities to visit other nurseries in the nursery chain, both in the United Kingdom and in America, to observe good childcare practice. She is constantly builds onto her own professional development and is currently working towards a further professional qualification.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to review the use of indoor space to facilitate children's play and check the condition of jigsaw, books and children's mealtime recognition cards. The nursery has re-organised the room, including the purchasing of new furniture, so that children have access to all areas throughout the day. Attention has also been given to the condition of books, jigsaws and children's mealtime cards. New resources have been purchased and mealtime cards are immediately replaced when they look untidy.

In addition, regarding nursery education, the setting was asked to monitor children's access to creative play materials and provide more opportunities for children to develop their independence and be more involved in daily routine tasks. Change to room layout and everyday routine has facilitated children's access to basic creative materials and increased opportunities for children to develop independence skills. For example, morning snack is now offered as a self service 'café style' meal, so that children develop skills such as pouring drinks and clearing away plates after eating. Overall these measures have enhanced children's enjoyment and learning as well as adding to welcoming enabling nursery environment which effectively fosters children's self-esteem and sense of belonging.

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.

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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):

- establish procedures to monitor the heating and minimise draughts and sudden drops in temperature in the disabled toilet.

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 physical play to provide challenge for older and more able children.

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