

Tower Hamlets College

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119623
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Chris Banks
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Registered person	The Corporation of Tower Hamlets College
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?

Tower Hamlets College Nursery was registered in 1999. It is organised for staff and students and is managed by the Student Services Department. It operates a term time service for children aged between 18 months and five years.

The nursery is based on college premises in E1 and opens Monday to Thursday from 09:30 - 12:30 and between 13:00 and 16:00. On Friday the nursery is open from 09:30 to 12:30. Children may attend a variety of sessions.

There are currently 34 children on roll. Of these, two receive a Nursery Education grant. The nursery may care for a maximum of 19 children at any one time.

There are two playrooms, a playground and garden for children's outdoor play.

A team of five staff work with the children, all of whom hold recognised qualifications in early years childcare.

The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting receives support from local authority advisory teachers and development workers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean, bright and welcoming surroundings. They benefit from the good hygiene practice of staff and are actively encouraged to learn about the importance of personal care. For example, they are learning that by washing their hands and covering their mouth when coughing, the potential for spreading any infection is avoided.

Children are also protected from risk of infection because health and hygiene procedures are closely followed by staff. Nappy changing arrangements are suitably managed and toilet training is handled sensitively. Staff and carers act in their best interests if children become ill and closely follow written guidance about exclusion periods for infectious illnesses. In this way, children do not return to nursery until they are completely well. Staff also follow a procedure for administering medication but record keeping arrangements do not include the parents signature. Parents are clearly informed in writing about both the sickness and medication procedure. All staff have recently updated their First Aid training which means they are well prepared in the event of any accident or emergency.

Outdoor play forms an integral part of each session with the small playground becoming the focus of most activity in the winter months. Here, children enjoy using wheeled toys, crawling through tunnels and jumping on the mini trampoline. Older children practise their climbing and balancing skills on the small tower and slide, and confidently negotiate their way around on trikes.

They are also becoming confident in developing their fine motor skills. They enjoy activities which involve cutting, manipulating brushes and pencils, and are also learning to use programmable toys such as keyboards and telephones.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in safe surroundings where improved practice in assessing potential risks helps protect children. The nursery is well secured and good practical precautions are taken by the college as a whole to ensure children's safety is protected. This includes having security staff and close circuit television. Good routine safety procedures such as regular fire drills are also carried out.

The actual arrival and departure of children is closely monitored by staff who always check any unknown persons identity, but the system for recording children's attendance must be improved as their time of arrival and departure is not always recorded.

Children are able to play safely and freely move around because space is well organised. Children enjoy playing with a good range of safe, clean and well maintained toys and equipment suitable for their ages and stages of development. Well organised space helps ensure they are able to freely choose resources from a wide selection of trays and low level storage.

The overall safety of children is positively protected because staff are well informed about their role and responsibility in safeguarding their welfare. Detailed, up to date written procedures helps ensure all staff are clear about the steps to take if there are concerns about a child. In the unlikely event an allegation is made against a member of staff, there is a clear procedure to follow which includes the role of Ofsted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff and are eager to participate in activities as soon as they arrive. The main room is well prepared in advance and is made welcoming and child friendly by staff. Children quickly settle into activities and, if they need support, are confident to approach staff.

They enjoy informal circle times with key workers. They look at books, listen to simple stories and are gradually learning the words of some songs. The key worker system is effective because staff take a personal interest in each child and get to know them well. They speak knowledgeably about their different personalities and traits and have quickly established warm and trusting relationships with new children who are sensitively supported during the settling in period.

Despite the sporadic attendance of children, staff plan well for children under three and have systems in place to monitor and record their progress. They are familiar with the Birth to three matters framework and use this to support the overall development of the younger age range. Each parent receives a comprehensive report about their child's first term and are subsequently kept well informed about progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children engage in some enjoyable, worthwhile activities and are making steady progress towards reaching their early learning goals before they go to school. This is because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan well for their overall learning and development.

Children's progress is well monitored and some clearly documented observation records help ensure they are appropriately assessed by their key worker on a regular basis. In some cases, however, plans for individual children's next steps are not always consistent because of children's sporadic attendance. All children are encouraged to learn at their own pace and realistic learning goals are set for those children who do not attend on a regular basis.

Most children are relatively new to the nursery but are already happy and well settled. They play comfortably alongside their peers and are gradually learning to cooperate and share space and resources. They are gently encouraged to negotiate their way through any minor conflicts and are learning to be patient whilst waiting to take their turn at the computer. When they show a particular kindness they are congratulated and are beginning to understand how their behaviour can upset others. Older children cooperate well with staff in their daily routines and are eager to help with chores, such as tidying away.

Children are developing some good self help skills and attempt to do many things for themselves. This includes dressing appropriately for outdoor play. If they find some tasks difficult, such as putting on Wellington boots and gloves, they are sensitively supported by staff.

Children understand when they need to listen and concentrate. They very much enjoy being part of an intimate group as they cuddle up and listen intently to stories. They help turn the pages and older children are often able to predict outcomes. Some activities are successfully linked to different areas of learning. For example when children sing 'twinkle twinkle little star' and 'swing swing', staff use name and number labels to illustrate different aspects of the song. Children have also contributed to making attractive jungle and night sky collages.

Children enjoy practising their early writing skills because good quality resources are easily accessible and children routinely use these as part of their everyday activities. They are also practising the techniques of new technology as they sit with staff to be guided in the use of the 'mouse' and keyboard.

Children explore their creativity in a range of ways. They freely experiment with sand, paint, play dough and the many and varied textures of collage materials which are attractively set out for children. Imaginary role play is also quite well resourced but children are not drawn to the current home play area which has been converted into a hair salon. Dressing up was by far the most popular of the two activities but resources need to be made more easily accessible to children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. They are made to feel very welcome in the setting and every effort is made to ensure parents who speak English as an additional language are involved in the care of their child. This is by using existing language skills and, where feasible, the services of translators and interpreters provided by the college. The settling in process for children is well managed and if children become overly distressed, parents are asked to leave their class, comfort their child and work with staff to ensure children are properly settled before they leave.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Details of the Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage are clearly and simply explained in writing and they receive regular progress reports on how their child is developing. Records include examples of children's work with photographs and observations of children during activities. Parents also receive some good quality written information about the overall service. This includes details of how policies and procedures are put into practice. The revised complaints procedure informs them about the role of Ofsted.

Children are valued and respected because staff have a good understanding of their individual needs and respond to them well. Comprehensive information is gathered and recorded at the beginning of the placement which also includes a child's religion and first language.

Children with disabilities or additional needs are well integrated and benefit from effective partnership working with parents and outside agencies. Children also benefit from the input of specialist professionals to support their communication and language development.

A good range of anti-discriminatory toys and equipment help children learn about our diverse communities and their active involvement in celebrating other festivals also helps broaden their understanding of the wider world. This approach helps foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children play well alongside each other in a cooperative and companionable atmosphere. Younger children are gradually learning to socialise and are encouraged to treat their friends kindly. Staff treat children with respect and behave in a caring and considerate way towards them. Children receive praise and encouragement for their achievements and are warmly comforted if they become distressed for any reason.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Children are cared for in a welcoming environment by a well qualified and experienced staff team, all of whom have been checked for their suitability to work with children.

They are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities and work well together to create the relaxed atmosphere enjoyed by children. Staff demonstrate an understanding of the different frameworks used to promote children's learning and development and are also familiar with some aspects of intended regulatory changes. There is a demonstrated commitment to further improve staff practice through training. Each member of staff has recently attended a Safeguarding Children course and have also renewed First Aid certificates.

Policies and procedures relating to children's overall health and safety are effectively put into practice by staff. Improvement to record keeping systems are required to ensure children's daily attendance is accurately recorded at all times and parents sign medication records. All confidential documentation is securely stored.

There is sufficient space for the number of children the nursery is registered to care for. Children comfortably find their way around the setting and enjoy exploring each of the clearly defined areas. There is a fairly comfortable area for children to rest and relax if they become ill or tired.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the provider was required to protect children's safety by carrying out a risk assessment of the premises and outdoor area. There is now a formal system in place to assess and minimise risks.

There was also a recommendation to further develop staff's understanding of child protection issues. All staff have now attended updated training in this area which assists in safeguarding the welfare of children.

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.

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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):

- ensure medication records are countersigned by parents
- ensure children's daily attendance is accurately recorded at all times

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):

- continue to develop systems for the observation and assessment of children's progress and pay particular attention to planning for their next steps
- further extend opportunities for children to engage in imaginative role play

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