

Tom Thumb Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340450
Inspection date	01 July 2008
Inspector	Sarah Williams
Setting Address	1-7 Beulah Path, London, E17 9LZ
Telephone number	02085 201 329
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Registered person	Tiny Learners 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 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?

Tom Thumb Nursery opened in 2008 following a change of ownership. It is one of two nurseries owned and run by Tiny Learners Ltd. The provision operates from a purpose-built nursery building and is situated in the Walthamstow village area of the London borough of Waltham Forest.

There are currently 42 children on roll, of whom 23 are in receipt of nursery funding. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

The provision employs eight staff of whom over half are qualified to Level two or above.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted at the setting as they follow procedures such as hand washing designed to help children learn about preventing the spread of germs. Children are reminded to use soap and to dry their hands after washing. However, some aspects of health and hygiene in the bathroom, such as the bin with its lid missing and the damaged areas of wood near the sinks, are a potential health risk to children. Children can take and use a tissue when they need one. Nappy changing routines include the use of gloves and antibacterial spray to keep areas clean and fresh. Staff are vigilant and consider children's safety whilst enjoying the sunshine: they are encouraged to apply sun cream and wear a sun hat. Children are kept in the shade when the sun is very strong: shelters and sunshades are effective in creating shady areas.

Children receive appropriate care when they have minor injuries or accidents. All staff are trained to administer first aid and a record is kept of any accidents signed by a parent or carer. Children requiring prescribed medication have the dose and time recorded, but currently these records are not confidential. There is no parental consent on record for staff to seek emergency medical advice or treatment: this potentially compromises children's health as they may need to be seen quickly if they are taken ill. Children who are sick or ill are not permitted to attend and parents are advised of suitable exclusion times for different conditions, in order to protect others from the risk of infection. Those who become poorly whilst attending are kept comfortable until they can be collected by a parent or carer.

Children enjoy a healthy diet of freshly prepared meals and snacks with a strong emphasis on fresh, healthy ingredients. Breakfast is served once most children have arrived and is a social occasion when children can chat to staff as they eat their cereal with milk. At lunchtime they have a cooked meal consisting of a main course and a dessert, usually fresh fruit, served appealingly. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and can have extra helpings if they wish. All dietary needs and preferences are considered and children are introduced to new tastes and flavours with seasonal produce and multicultural-inspired dishes.

Children are able to develop their physical skills well. They have periods of free access to the safe outdoor area which is well-equipped with fixed play equipment, wheeled toys and small equipment such as balls and larger construction toys. They are very competent at moving around safely and skilfully, showing regard for space and avoiding collisions. Younger children enjoy the ball pond whilst older children are independent at the sand tray or spray painting a large wall artwork. Children enjoy water play, placed at ground level to allow babies to join in, gleefully splashing and feeling the bubbles. Children learn to use tools such as cutlery, scissors and glue sticks. They enjoy brushing and styling hair in the role play hairdressers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are greeted on arrival and warmly welcomed at the setting. Staff make a point of talking to all parents as they deliver the children and allow them time to be settled if needed. The entrance area has notice boards with information and policies displayed for parents. There is a useful buggy store under cover so parents can leave a pushchair safely and securely. The nursery environment is bright and airy with good ventilation from the doors and windows

opening on to the outside area. However, doors are not secured back when open and are a potential hazard to little fingers.

Resources are generally well-organised, labelled and stored at child level so they can access them independently. However, an unsecured cupboard in the baby room has unsuitable items and materials such as paints which are accessible to any child using the room and is a potential hazard. Children are competent when moving about and are reminded to keep themselves safe when getting chairs, toys and equipment. At lunchtime the present arrangement involves the cook and other staff making a large number of trips between the kitchen and care rooms with hot food, drinks and plates being carried back and forth: potentially a hazard to children who may be moving about.

Children are secure and unable to leave the setting unseen. They are only released into the care of a known adult: if this is not the parent or usual named contact special permission in advance is sought. Children practise regular fire drills so they know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. If they leave the premises to go on a planned outing, such as to the music and movement sessions or the toy library, written consent is sought from parents and staff ratios are carefully considered to ensure children's safety.

Children are protected from harm or neglect as staff have attended training with regard to safeguarding issues. They are confident in referring any concerns to ensure children and families receive appropriate support, whilst recognising that children's welfare is paramount. Parents can see the child protection policy and are made aware of the group's responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The younger children are cared for, and have activities provided for them, based on the guidance contained within the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This takes account of their needs and developmental stages and ensures they have access to suitable, safe equipment and resources to help them make all round progress. Staff are very respectful when talking to the children and helping them with day-to-day needs and personal care, ensuring that self-esteem remains intact and praising them for their positive behaviour and effort. The children enjoy the free-flow play between the indoor and outdoor environment and show their independence by playing happily with the toys and resources available to them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children aged three and above have an educational programme based on the Foundation Stage and designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones and towards the early learning goals. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of how to plan and deliver activities and base their planning on the provision of choice for children and free-flow play. This does give children the opportunity to be independent and make decisions, however, there is limited challenge as the observations of children fail to include what children need to do next to progress their learning.

Children have access to mark-making materials and equipment, but the presentation of these does not always encourage writing for different purposes. The children use a name card to self-register when they first arrive, but staff fail to make use of further opportunities during routines and play times to encourage children to recognise and write their own names, for example when naming work. Children listen well and can follow instructions, for example to

tidy up at changeover times. Some children attend French classes which enhances their listening and responding skills and adds another dimension to language development. Children can use the nursery books for pleasure and to find information. Group story times allow them to hear and join in with favourite stories and develop a love of story language.

Children count to 10 and beyond and are encouraged to use their calculation skills as they lay the table for lunch each day. Sand and water play provide the opportunity to learn about weight and capacity as they fill and empty containers, however, in some cases the presentation of the resources and the lack of focused planning results in limited learning and challenge in these basic activities. Children enjoy construction kits to build models and explore shapes and colours. Routines teach children about patterns and what they should expect next.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced by first-hand experiences as they explore and investigate materials and textures. The garden has growing spaces and sensory areas such as the herb garden. Children can dig and plant seeds, helping them with an understanding of life cycles and the needs of living things. They create collages using various items with different textures and enjoy squirting paint to see what effects they can achieve. Play technology in the role play area helps children make sense of the things they see in use in their homes and a digital camera records what they do, for recall and future reference. Children leave the setting to visit the toy library and go to the parks and playgrounds nearby, giving them an insight into the local area.

Children enjoy creative activities, both free and guided. Their artwork, such as the butterfly paintings and their names in glitter and paint, is used to decorate the nursery. They have use of musical instruments to learn about sounds and rhythm. Some children attend drama sessions with a specialist teacher. Children taste food from different cultures as they celebrate festivals. They talk about their likes and dislikes at lunchtime as new foods are introduced. Children become absorbed in role play and have costumes and props to recreate domestic scenes and try out new roles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known to staff, which enables them to provide appropriate care based on their requirements. The registration forms provide emergency contacts and detail the children's medical and dietary needs. Children are happy and settled at the nursery and enjoy playing and socialising with their peers and the staff in the generally relaxed family atmosphere. All children are included and made welcome: toddlers and pre-schoolers mix well together when playing outside, teaching them tolerance and co-operation for one another's differences. Children have plenty of opportunities to move about freely and choose what they would like to play with and do. This works particularly well when they have access to the outside area and can take equipment from the undercover play area or use the toys and activities set out for them by staff.

The nursery is fortunate in welcoming children and staff from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. They celebrate many festivals and cultural events and enjoy the richness of the cultural diversity this provides. Lively, world music provides an uplifting soundtrack whilst the children play and adds to the atmosphere of harmony and fun. Resources and images include children and families from many and varied cultures so creating a climate of understanding and acceptance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Babies have a separate base room so they can play quietly and uninterruptedly with one another and the staff, but are given the opportunity to mix with the older children at different times. This increases their confidence and social development and provides variety and stimulation. Babies receive very warm and positive interaction from the staff caring for them, showing a good understanding of their developmental needs. They are chatted to and helped to enjoy the toys and activities, such as water play and building with blocks: lots of laughter and fun make the babies feel happy and well cared for. A cuddle, and being held close when settling down for a nap is soothing and ensures a peaceful sleep. Their food needs and personal care routines are managed by their key worker, building positive relationships and making sure parents are kept informed on a day-to-day basis.

Toddlers too have their own base room and enjoy a circle time that is fun and happy. After lunch the room is prepared with floor mats for those who wish to sleep, with dimmed lighting and soft music to aid the calm ambience. During play times they have free access to outdoors and mix freely with the other age groups, again with a positive effect on their social development and confidence building. Staff make observations and record what they see the children doing, compiling a record that can be shared with parents if they wish.

Children needing additional support for any learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported from within the nursery with outside professional help as required. Parents are always included in any individual learning plans and regular reviews to assess progress made. All children are included and those who have English as an additional language are supported to ensure they can take a full part in all activities. Staff report that children make good progress in language development as they play with their peers.

Children's behaviour is good. They respond positively to the consistent management by staff, who understand children's varying developmental stages and adjust their expectations accordingly. They are helped to understand how their behaviour affects others and learn to share and take turns with equipment and staff's time and attention. Children develop the confidence to ask for help when they need it, for example at lunch time or when using the bathroom. Staff are unfailingly cheerful and responsive, whilst helping children follow routines such as washing their hands and helping to tidy up.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed and have information provided for them on the notice boards and various posters in the nursery. They have the opportunity to become involved with their child's education as they can chat to staff each day. However, the current system of observations and recording children's achievements lacks evaluation and does not feed into what the next stages of learning might be, so is of limited value. Staff are approachable and friendly and value their conversations with parents to help them care for the children appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have undergone checks and vetting procedures to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children. Suitably robust recruitment procedures are in place and new staff have an induction programme to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities and day-to-day operation of the nursery.

The nursery is generally well-organised and the premises and resources are used to the advantage of the children attending. The daily attendance register shows children and staff present: staff

rotas ensure that ratios are met and breaks are covered, so children are always in the care of suitable adults.

Most paperwork and documentation to support children's care and welfare is in place, but there are some omissions, such as the consent to seek medical advice or treatment which are lacking, potentially compromising children's welfare.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff team is led by an experienced manager who follows an ethos of child-centred and homely provision. Staff are encouraged to attend training to keep abreast of changes to child care and education but report that they cannot always attend courses due to limited availability. Support from the local authority is welcomed and staff are keen to act on advice and ideas to improve the setting and raise standards.

There is some awareness of strengths and weaknesses at the setting but there is no real action plan in place to address issues or prioritise changes to the premises which would enhance and benefit the learning environment. The educational programme focuses on children's choice and free access to toys and play materials, which is a positive approach and builds children's confidence and independence. However, lack of regular, in-depth monitoring of the educational provision and guidance for staff delivering the Foundation Stage means there is limited challenge to children to help them achieve to the best of their potential. The system of written observations is not well-understood so does not help to plan for children's individual learning and development.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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):

- ensure that signed parental consent forms are in place to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. Review procedure for recording medication administered so that confidentiality of records is maintained
- take steps to prevent the risk of spread of infection by ensure that children are not exposed to waste materials in the bathroom and attend to damaged areas near the wash hand basins which could harbour bacteria
- take steps to minimise hazards to children from identified risks: this refers to the unsecured internal and external doors and the unsecured low level storage cupboard containing paints and other materials in the baby room. Review lunchtime arrangements to minimise journeys for the cook and other staff carrying hot food, liquids and serving dishes to and from the kitchen.

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):

- improve the presentation of resources and children's opportunities to write for different purposes: have their efforts valued by including writing on displays throughout the nursery
- improve the presentation of resources i.e. sand and sand tools/toys, to make them more accessible and appealing and extend the learning opportunities for children
- ensure that observations are meaningful by using them to assess progress and help plan the next stages of learning for individual children.

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