



Tiny Hearts

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY248744
Inspection date	20 April 2006
Inspector	Frank William Kelly
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Registered person	Christine and Steven James Moore
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

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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 good. 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?

Tiny Hearts Day Nursery has been registered since 2003 and is operated by an informal partnership.

It operates from a self contained premises which has eight playrooms. It is situated in the Waterloo area of Merseyside. A maximum of 45 children may attend the setting at any one time. It operates each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00, 51 weeks per year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from 9 months to 4 years on roll. Of these, 32 receive funded nursery care. Children come from a wide catchment area, as parents travel through and to the area to work.

The nursery employs 15 staff, 13 of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of the staff currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment. They are kept healthy and free from infection because staff have a good understanding of how and why procedures should be implemented. For example, daily cleaning schedules are followed and effective food hygiene procedures implemented. Staff follow the nappy changing routine very well and on most occasions with consistency. The effective sick children, medication administration and accidents procedures further keep the children healthy and well. They are understood by staff and parents alike.

Good adult support enables children to gain a good understanding of staying healthy, such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet or playing in the sand. Older children do this well, they understand the need to use the soap and rub it into their hands before rinsing. However, until the inspection staff had not considered washing the babies' hands before they ate.

Children have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills as staff plan regular opportunities to play outside on the bikes, or visit the soft play room inside where they can jump, climb, slither and crawl. Such activities help raise children's heart rate and develop their large muscle groups. Older children demonstrate good spatial awareness as they manoeuvre the bikes and other wheeled resources, including two wheeled scooters around the other children and equipment whilst outside. Others use hoola hoops very well and eagerly try to hop on one leg. Some two year olds expertly use the pedals to propel their trikes, and babies developing walking skills are supported by good quality push and pull, or sit and ride toys. The children enjoy and participate in group games, such as Lucy Locket.

Indoors babies play with a colourful range of stacking and push-button toys which develop their hand to eye coordination. Older children enjoy play in the sand and water where they fill or pour varying jugs, cups and moulds. A wide variety of different construction toys enable children to practise and experiment with a range of different shapes and connecting methods.

Children have regular access to fresh drinking water to keep themselves refreshed. Babies are provided with regular drinks throughout the day and are nursed to meet their individual routines. Children enjoy a relaxed social occasion during snack and meal times. They are served a varied diet of fresh fruit, and mainly freshly prepared meals, such as Irish stew and turkey casserole. Children enjoy the occasional treat or

dessert including jelly and ice cream or Swiss roll and custard. Any commercially produced foods have been carefully considered to ensure that they contain low levels of salt and no additives. On the whole this provides the children with a balanced and nutritious diet. Staff introduce new foods and tastes to the children through planned activities linked to the themes, such as fruit tasting whilst being blindfolded as part of learning about their senses.

Babies are kept clean and comfortable at all times as their eating, sleeping and changing needs follow their own routines. Staff encourage babies to help feed themselves by providing spoons and praising them when they try to feed themselves. All babies have their hands and faces wiped with a clean flannel after eating, which helps them to feel comfortable.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are well maintained and suitably organised, with sufficient space for the children to eat, rest and play according to their individual needs. The playrooms and entrance areas are attractively decorated with both children's and commercially produced pictures and displays, which provide a welcoming environment for children and parents alike. The outside play area is well thought out and the organisation of woodland area and the walled fairy garden creates a magical feel which children thoroughly enjoy. Plants, hidden gnomes, ornamental woodland creatures, log effect garden furniture and 'giant's footsteps' help to capture their imagination, and make this an exciting place to play in and investigate.

There is an excellent and varied selection of high quality, well maintained toys, books, and other equipment, available for the staff to use with the children. This is rotated regularly and appropriately deployed so that it is suitable to safely meet the differing developmental needs of the children.

Good safety procedures are in place that protect children from danger. These are further underpinned by annual maintenance systems, such as the servicing of the fire extinguishers and portable electrical equipment. Security is consistently maintained and staff supervise the children very well to help safeguard them. Risk assessment is carried out regularly and the emergency evacuation procedure is practised with the children so they are familiar with what to do should they hear the fire alarm. Children learn about safety and keeping themselves and others free from harm as staff talk to them about what they are doing, such as looking where they are going whilst using the stairs. Planned activities and stories about "people who help us" are helping older children to gain an understanding of safety in their wider world. Pictures of crossing attendants, pedestrian crossings and visits from the police and to the local fire station provide the children with valuable discussions and practical learning experiences. These are helping children to further develop their understanding of keeping themselves and others safe.

The children's welfare is further safeguarded as many staff have completed first aid training and have a satisfactory understanding of child protection. Adequate procedures are in place to monitor and report any concerns, although those relating

to allegations against staff lack detail. These, along with written policies that reflect government and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, are easily accessible to the staff and shared with parents during the registration process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and secure. Their good relationships with the staff mean that they have a strong sense of belonging, which is further enhanced as staff praise and show interest in their achievements. This in turn boosts children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are lively and interested in what is available to them. They enjoy many opportunities to make decisions about what to play with and with who. Younger children including the older babies thoroughly enjoy songs and action rhymes. Babies excitedly clap along to Peter Rabbit, whilst toddlers raucously shout 'Gruffalo crumble' demonstrating familiarity with the rhyming stories, such as the Gruffalo.

They enjoy many opportunities to use tools and tactile materials as sand, water and some craft activities are made available to them on a daily basis. Staff positively display the children's art and creative work throughout the setting and, whilst there is some evidence of children's independent creativity, much of the themed work is very adult led. This restricts children's opportunities to freely express their own creativity.

Care of babies is very good, they enjoy lots of cuddles and have a secure bond with their carers. Staff are very knowledgeable about the babies in their care and use information from the parents effectively to ensure continuity of care. Babies enjoy high levels of interaction with the staff that enables them to feel safe and confident to explore their surroundings.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff working directly with the children have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how specific activities relate to the six areas of learning and children's development. This is contributing in a positive way to the children's learning and progress. However, at times they do not always plan the activities with a clear learning intention, or link their observations of what children can do to the future planning to ensure that the individual child continues to progress their learning. That said, children are making good progress in all areas of learning due to the good adult interactions and broad range of interesting and varied activities linked to themes, such as senses or people who help us. The children are self sufficient in selecting resources available to them and confidently ask adults for help to locate those they cannot find or reach, such as the 'sparkly cup'.

Children are interested and eager to be involved in activities. They relate well to and play well with each other, pouring and filling the baby's bath water and making snails in the sand. Children are eager to engage others in conversation. They eagerly invite adults to join them in their play and ask visitors questions, such as 'are you a doctor?'

They enjoy songs and stories, listen well, and recognise their names and individual letters. There are good opportunities for children to practise their writing skills during their play. Some older children attempt to write letters in the air with their fingers during circle time.

Children show a healthy interest in numbers and counting. They enjoy and join in number rhymes and songs, counting up and back. They count correctly from different starting points from 5 to 16. Staff use real situations well to consolidate children's learning of numbers. For example, older children calculate how many cups are needed for each group of children at lunch time. The use of numbers in the environment is helping children to recognise numerals and correctly represent how many, such as holding up three fingers to show how many bananas are left whilst singing the 'number rumba'.

Children have a good sense of time. They differentiate between past and present and talk about what happened whilst on holiday, as they recall that 'the cricket was in the grass and was very noisy'. Staff invite children to talk about the weather and the days of the week. Children know that Monday starts the week and that they stay at home at the weekend. Children's attention is drawn to the use and importance of technology in our everyday lives. They have regular access to computers and toys, such as telephones, calculators and microwaves. They spontaneously share what they know, such as when playing with the toy lawn mower an older child announces that 'this red button turns it on and off'. Children use a range of tools to design and make things with. For example, they know to tap the snail mould in the sand with the spade or that they need scissors to cut the string when making telephones. Children are familiar with different resources, such as paint, crayons and glue, and use them for their own purposes. Children have some time to explore their own ideas at the easel. They enjoy good opportunities for well resourced role play, such as in the hospital, and love to play in the hidden garden where they look for fairies or ask visitors if they have seen the 'Giant's footsteps'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The good information systems in place help staff meet the children's individual needs well. Thus, children are valued as individuals and are treated with equal concern. Staff have completed relevant training and follow suitable steps to help promote the welfare and development of children with special needs.

Children gain awareness of their local environment and the diversity of the wider world through a very good selection of resources that promote positive images of others and challenge the stereotypical images of ethnicity and gender. Children enjoy many activities based on their own festivals and celebrations. They also learn about others' similarities and differences through stories, discussion and planned activities linked to the festivals of others, including Diwali and Chinese New Year. There is a strong emphasis on helping others through fund raising and social activities, such as Red Nose Day and the Big Toddle Walk at Chester Zoo.

Staff manage the children's behaviour very well. Praise and encouragement are

consistent and children mirror the good role models presented by the staff. They are familiar with the boundaries and simple rules and respond appropriately. Staff prompt good manners, giving children praise for their achievements. They give good consideration to the children's stage of development and maturity, and use imaginative and effective strategies to encourage good behaviour. Staff's animated and skilful use of puppets, such as 'Salt the cat', successfully capture the imagination and attention of the children and visitors alike. Through activities, such as these, the children are gaining a good understanding of the importance of listening to others, taking turns fairly and showing respect, care and concern for one another. This and the caring environment of the nursery is successfully fostering their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from the close relationship staff have with parents. Parents are relaxed and chatty when leaving and collecting their children, with much information shared verbally during these times. The setting operates an open door policy and several parents commented on this whilst sharing their views with Ofsted during the inspection. All praised the good care they feel their children receive and the friendly relationships that they have with the staff. All felt that they were kept sufficiently informed of how their child's day had been and what they had enjoyed and achieved. In addition regular printed information is posted around the nursery to help keep parents up to date with current and forthcoming events. There is some information about themes relating to current songs, stories and the different childcare frameworks, such as Birth to three matters framework or the Foundation Stage.

The partnership with parents of educational funded children is satisfactory. Parents are informed of the Foundation Stage through discussion with the staff, and there is some information displayed relating to the six areas of learning. However, there is none directly linked to how parents can contribute to the children's learning at home. Parents may ask to see their child's development records and can arrange meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress if they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are suitable procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff. The provider is aware of the recent changes to regulation, and the required policies and procedures have been revised. The children are cared for by mainly experienced and suitably qualified staff, which contributes to the well-being and consistency of care for the children. Staffing ratios are met at all times and staff deployment is good. Staff generally work with children in small groups.

Space and resources in the rooms are organised well for all the children, but some of the planned activities in the toddler room and pre school rooms on occasions last too long. This means that younger children lose interest and the older children's enjoyment and learning is sometimes interrupted. Very good consideration has been given to the suitability of furniture and toys to promote a stimulating, welcoming and safe environment for young children to learn and develop. The owner of the nursery is committed to the ongoing investment of toys and resources and this is evident in

the selection, quality and condition of the equipment available. Suitable policies and procedures are in place to underpin the sound management of the setting and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The management are keen to improve the outcomes for children and have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

However, at present the appraisal systems are informal and do not securely link to staffs future training needs. Thus, staff are not always clear about planning systems and organising planned activities to fully challenge and meet the differing needs of the children. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to three recommendations: which included updating required documentation; implementing a more robust induction and staff appraisal system so that staff implemented regulatory procedures consistently; and revising the daily routines so that children enjoyed more opportunities to develop and practice their growing independence.

Children's care and safety has been much improved through the revised procedures for induction, as staff are now fully familiar with the regulatory procedures, such as the correct and consistent recording of accident records. Children's safety and well-being has been further enhanced as the setting has now obtained written parental consents for the seeking of emergency medical treatment for all children in their care.

Reorganising of daily routines means that children's growing independence is being fostered as they are invited to help set tables and hand out cups and cutlery at snack and meal times. Older children, with staff support are able to pour their own drinks.

This is the first funded nursery education inspection so there are no recommendations to report.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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):

- revise management tracking systems to ensure that staff effectively differentiate children's needs during planned and group activities
- revise the appraisal system so that it clearly identifies staff training needs and helps to plan their future development.

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):

- ensure that the planning consistently includes the learning intention and is regularly evaluated. Ensure that staff use observations of the children's learning to inform the future planning
- consider ways that parents can be involved with their child's learning at home, and contribute to their assessment records if they so wish to do so.

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