



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219966

DfES Number: 522559

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	22/11/2004
Inspector Name	Rachael Mankiewicz

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Tiny Tows Pre-School
Setting Address	Islington Road Towcester Northamptonshire NN12 6AU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Tiny Tows Pre-School 1041615
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Tiny Tows Pre-School
Address	Islington Road Towcester Northamptonshire NN12 6AU

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Tiny Tows Pre-school has been in operation at Towcester Infants School for approximately nine 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 47 children on roll. This includes funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The staff have knowledge and experience to support children with special needs, or 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. Six of the staff have Level 3 qualifications in early years care, and the other three are beginning early years training. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Tiny Tows Pre-School provides good quality nursery education which enables children to make generally good progress overall towards the early learning goals. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and the areas of physical, mathematics and creative development is very good.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which can be seen through the full range of activities and resources which are planned to help children learn through play. They all contribute to planning, teaching and assessment. Observation and assessment are effective but are not fully utilised to identify children's future learning needs and inform planning. Activities are evaluated and monitored to cover all aspects of the curriculum. However, the opportunities for children to experience technology and to make marks in role play are not currently promoted in depth. Staff are able to question children to extend their vocabulary and knowledge, and help them make choices. Their interaction with children is good. Staff act as good role models, and are rewarded with children respectful of friends and adults. They have knowledge and experience of special educational needs and of English as the child's second language. Staff are able to support the needs of individual children, based on an effective key worker system.

The leadership and management of the group is generally good. The committee has developed systems for induction and appraisal, and encourages staff to undertake training. Staff show a strong commitment to the improvement of the education. They review practices, and take advice and support to develop planning.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are informed about the progress of the children, but do not receive information to support and extend their child's learning at home. They are involved in management and a beneficial helper rota.

What is being done well?

- The area of personal, social and emotional development is an area of very good progress. Children talk confidently to each other, to staff and to other adults. They listen and interact in large and small groups, and express their feelings and experiences well.
- Staff:child ratios are high which enable the individual needs of children to be supported. Some staff have knowledge and experience in the field of special needs. Parents and staff work in close partnership to benefit all children.
- Children's physical skills are promoted effectively through a stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities. They are developing good spatial awareness as they move independently around the room or play as a large group.

Opportunities for developing hand/eye co-ordination are varied and interesting.

- Staff interact well with children, extending individual learning through appropriate and thoughtful questioning. Children's natural enthusiasm is fostered well through many of the activities, both during free-play and adult-directed activities.

What needs to be improved?

- the use of observations and assessments of children's progress, plus information from parents, to influence planning for children's future learning
- the system used to inform parents about how to extend children's learning at home
- the planning and use of resources to increase children's knowledge of information and communication technology and to experience how machines work
- opportunities for mark-making during imaginative role play, to enable children to gain experience of writing as a means of recording and communicating.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection. The staff have made some developments in planning and teaching which were raised as key issues in the previous inspection report. Planning has been reviewed to include opportunities for children to express themselves through music. Children have regular access to musical instruments and music tapes to increase their awareness of a variety of music.

early learning records have been developed as part of an effective system of observation and assessment. These records are not yet fully utilised to inform planning for children's progress. This has been made an issue to be developed further as an outcome of this inspection. Short term planning of activities shows which are the large group, free-play or adult directed activities. Staff have the skills to provide children with a good level of support, ask appropriate questions to make children think, make choices and arrive at decisions. Information is shared on a regular basis, at the end of the day and on a formal basis during appointments with parents. The prospectus contains information about the Foundation Stage and the calendar of topics is made known. Parents do not receive detailed information about the planning nor ideas about how to extend their child's learning at home. This has been included in the key issues to be developed as an outcome of this inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show confidence and independence as they move between self-chosen activities. Most children show perseverance, when making a candle decoration and constructing Mobilo. They are aware of routines and rules, and they behave well. The interaction between children and adults is very good. Children show care and concern for others as they go to the hall. They develop an awareness of other cultures through an interest in festivals and visits from others in the community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children communicate confidently and take turns in conversations. They listen to each other and to staff, respond to instructions, and convey what they are doing and how they feel. They understand that written words convey messages and enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Most of the children recognise the initial letters and sounds in their names. They enjoy free-painting but do not always make marks freely while they play. More able children can write their names successfully.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children count up to 10 well and often. More able children are beginning to solve simple problems such as the number of wheels they need. They compare different numbers of objects, and attempt simple subtraction as they talk about more and less, and play mathematical games. Children are developing their knowledge of different shapes by comparing objects such as squares and triangles in construction games. They are beginning to understand about patterns and sequence when using threading laces.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children explore different materials in crafts, playdough, and with construction toys, and they investigate how changes occur. However, the children have few opportunities to experience technology and to find out how machines work. Children talk about events in their own lives and show some awareness of time and space, including an awareness of the local community but have less opportunity to look at the wider world. They have begun to learn about other people, their roles and cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children handle a range of materials, tools and small equipment, and their manipulative skills are good. They confidently move around the room, showing awareness of the other children. The children develop their larger muscles through using challenging apparatus and good space which they negotiate well in team games. Older children show an awareness of their own physical needs through good hygiene practice and a topic on their bodies and exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy taking part in role-play, making their own train to travel in. They work imaginatively with a good selection of small-world resources. Children experience a range of sensory experiences, such as food tasting and wet and dry sand, and are able to express themselves through the materials. They enjoy creative activities using different craft materials, and explore sound with singing and instruments.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- 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
- review how parents are informed about how to extend children's learning at home
- develop the planning and use of resources to increase children's knowledge of information and communication technology and to allow them to experience how machines work
- increase opportunities for mark-making during imaginative role play, to enable them to gain experience of writing as a means of recording and communicating.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.