

Tiny Tows Pre-School

Towcester Infant School, Islington Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 6AU

Inspection date	12/09/2014
Previous inspection date	21/01/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Staff have an effective understanding of safeguarding procedures and there are detailed policies in place to support practice. As a result, children are protected and kept safe from harm.
- Children are able to access the outdoor area regularly for physical play and fresh air. This promotes their health and well-being in addition to developing their learning.
- Managers and staff maintain very strong links with the school in which the pre-school is situated, particularly with Reception class staff, so that children are well prepared and supported for transition into school.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not share arrangements for key persons with parents when their child first starts pre-school, or explain the role that the key person plays in enabling children to form secure attachments to a familiar person as they separate from their parents.
- Staff are not yet using their observations and assessments of children's individual interests, needs and capabilities to inform planning, so that activities have suitable levels of challenge and are enjoyable for all children. As a result, children's learning is not fully extended or maximised to its potential.
- The manager has not yet begun monitoring planning and assessment systems to ensure that staff assessments of children are accurate and that their next steps in learning are appropriately identified and being fed into planning.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the two playrooms, snack area and the outdoor area.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the registered individual, manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector discussed the provider's monitoring and evaluation procedures and plans for improvement.
- The inspector looked at a sample of records and policies relating to children's welfare, health and safety.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Victoria Mulholland

Full report

Information about the setting

Tiny Tows Pre-School opened in 1999 and is registered on the Early Years Register on the site of Towcester Primary school. The provision was previously situated at another premises in the town. The pre-school serves the local area and most of the children move on to attend the primary school. It operates from two classrooms at the school and shares facilities in the school, including toilets, the hall and outdoor areas. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with a Foundation degree at level 5. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only, between 8.45am and 3.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 36 children on roll, who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that each child and parent is introduced to their assigned key person as soon as the child starts attending, so that they are supported in becoming familiar with the setting and learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- use information gained from observations of children's individual interests, needs and stages of development to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child across the seven areas of learning and development.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- monitor the accuracy of staff's assessment and planning for children's next steps, so that it is consistent, precise and accurately identifies all children's skills and progress and appropriately provides a broad range of experiences.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children enjoy being at the pre-school. Children returning from the summer break are settling back into pre-school quickly and new starters are beginning to settle and are exploring resources in the indoor and outdoor play areas. Staff provide a range of resources and opportunities for open-ended activity. These include, train sets, farm sets, mini-world houses, pasta, rice and lentils in an exploration tray, a home area with

dressing-up clothes, sand, gloop, and creative resources, such as, paper, pens, glue sticks, glitter and feathers. Staff support children to develop characteristics of effective learners as they play and explore. Staff use commentary to describe what children are doing or to talk about what is happening, which helps children to develop understanding of concepts, such as size, and extends vocabulary. The questions that staff ask children vary in quality. Closed questions, such as 'What colour is that?' do not provide opportunities for children to develop their thinking or ideas. Open-ended questions, such as 'Why is it not working?' and 'How can we fix it?' challenge children's thinking more effectively, but sometimes staff do not then allow children enough time to respond and answer the questions themselves, or they do not expect a response or persist in encouraging the child to answer. This limits children's development of communication skills and critical thinking skills in readiness for school.

Children develop self-confidence and self-awareness as they select resources and make decisions about how to use them, and as they interact with other children and staff. Staff respond playfully to child-initiated interactions. For example, in the outdoor area, two children are pretending to be pirates. One of them seeks to involve a staff member by suggesting that she is a crocodile. The staff member responds to the suggestion by pretending to be a crocodile and joining in with their shared imaginative game. As a result, children learn that their ideas are valued, their relationships with staff develop, their enjoyment is enhanced and their self-confidence grows. However, teaching requires improvement because there is not enough balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and planning does not sufficiently take into consideration children's individual needs, interests and stages of development. Although, planning covered one adult-led activity each week, there was little differentiation to meet the needs of all children. The newly appointed leadership team have identified that planning this term will focus on an adult-led activity each day, so that the seven areas of learning have are covered in greater breadth and depth. The new planning identifies children's individual intended learning outcomes but has not yet been implemented.

Parents are welcomed into the pre-school and are encouraged to complete a 'Getting to know you' form before their child begins attending, with personal information, such as their child's interests, likes and dislikes. Staff complete a My first day record of what each child has done during their first session and this is shared with parents. Each child has an individual learning journey folder and staff routinely take photographs and make observations of children engaged in activities. These folders are usually available for parents to look at. Overall, most children are seen to be broadly working within the typical range of development expected for their age. However, staff do not consistently use information gathered in children's learning journey records to monitor children's learning and development or to plan activities that will challenge them. The progress check for children between the ages of two and three years is completed by the child's key person. Parents are invited into pre-school to read it through and talk about their child's progress. They are encouraged to add information that they would like included. Staff complete an assessment summary for their key children at the end of each term and share these with parents. Children's next steps in learning are included on these summaries but staff do not always identify next steps appropriately and these are not effectively fed into future planning. A newly obtained online resource is currently being trialled in the pre-school with the aim of supporting staff in making observations and assessments of children's learning

and progress. Staff are not yet familiar with this resource and with how best to use it as a tool to support accurate assessment of children's skills and development.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The pre-school benefits from a stable, long-term staff team, who work well together to safeguard children. Staff are friendly, enthusiastic and calm. They are skilled at supporting children's attempts to do things for themselves. They know how to give children time to achieve things independently and when to step in or offer help, for example, as children try to put on coats or shoes. Children's behaviour is usually good and staff are teaching children about behaviour boundaries, such as, taking turns, sharing and being careful in their use of toys. Staff encourage children to develop independence skills as they self-register by finding their photograph and sticking it onto the registration board on arrival. They find their name on a teddy card and decide which peg to put it on, before hanging up their own coats and as they select resources and make choices about where they are going to play throughout the session.

Children are learning about self-care and personal hygiene, such as washing their hands after going to the toilet and before snack or lunch club. Staff supervise pre-school children as they go into the main school building to use the toilets that are shared with children from the infant school classes. Staff wear appropriate protective clothing when changing two-year-old children at the changing station that is situated within their playroom. Healthy and nutritional snacks, such as a variety of breakfast cereals, are provided and children's independence skills continue to be promoted as they choose a snack, get a spoon, pour their own milk and water and feed themselves. Staff organise the daily routine so that children have opportunity to access the outdoor play area for much of the session if they so choose and as far as weather allows. The enclosed outdoor area is shared by the two-, three- and four-year-old children. It has recently been re-developed and incorporates a garden area for digging, a small wooden climbing platform and a ground-level bridge for children to cross over. There is a paved area for riding bikes and scooters. Fixed equipment in the enclosed area is well-suited to younger children. The pre-school also have access to larger, more challenging climbing and play equipment in the main school playground adjacent to their own outdoor area, so older children have opportunities to assess and take risks. Staff carry out daily risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor areas to ensure that children are kept safe. They also carry out risk assessments before going on visits, for example, to feed the ducks at a nearby pond.

Each child is assigned a key person. Parents and children who are returning after the summer break know who their key person is and have established relationships with them. However, new parents are not introduced to their key person as soon as their child starts attending and are not initially made aware of how the key person will support their child to settle in and become familiar with the pre-school. Consequently, the building of strong relationships between parent, child and key person is delayed. Staff do not maximise opportunities to immediately tailor learning and care to meet children's individual needs on entry and parents are not given effective support in preparing their child emotionally for their move into the pre-school. Nevertheless, parents speak positively about staff and their

children's initial experiences of pre-school. The pre-school has very strong links with the school Reception class, which is situated in a neighbouring classroom. Pre-school children are given regular opportunities to visit the Reception class for half-hour periods. As a result, children become familiar with Reception staff over the year and this eases their transition into school and supports them in being emotionally ready to move into school at the end of their time at pre-school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The newly appointed management team is overseen by the registered individual and pre-school committee. The leaders and managers understand their roles and responsibilities to meet the learning and development and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new manager and deputy manager have been staff members in the pre-school for several years and they have clear understanding of policies and procedures and how they are currently implemented. The manager has begun self-evaluation and aspires to improve current practice, for example, by making planning and assessment more robust and more focused on children's individual needs. However, the management team has not yet had time to implement and monitor the impact of these changes.

The staff team is well established and appropriate checks on adults have been carried out to safeguard children. All staff have received training in safeguarding and paediatric first-aid, and staff training plans support monitoring to ensure that this training is renewed every three years. Staff are able to talk about signs of abuse to look out for and about what they would do if they had concerns about a child. Safeguarding policies and procedures include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or manager. There is also a policy regarding the use of mobile telephones and cameras to protect children from their misuse. All policies are agreed and signed by the committee and staff are required to sign annually to say they have read and understood policies. Time is also allocated in staff meetings to review policies and procedures. Staff are offered opportunities for access training for ongoing professional development.

Partnerships with parents are encouraged and the manager seeks parental opinions about proposed changes to practice and takes parents' views into account. For example, parents' views were sought before changes were made to the operating hours and lunch club times. Parents speak positively about the staff and setting. Progress summaries for children are shared with parents termly and a parents' evening is held in the summer term. The pre-school has very good links with the school Reception class and work well with school staff to support children's transition. Partnerships with external agencies, such as the portage team and local Sure Start centre are also established. As a result, the manager is able to secure appropriate interventions to enable children to receive additional support, should they need it.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219966
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	865830
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	36
Name of provider	Tiny Tows Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	21/01/2010
Telephone number	01327 354815

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

