

Tameside College Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	312372
Inspection date	18 February 2008
Inspector	Jill Lee
Setting Address	Beaufort Road, Tameside, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, OL6 6NX
Telephone number	0161 908 6645
E-mail	
Registered person	Tameside College Pre School
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?

Tameside College Pre-School opened in 1991. It is situated on the Ashton-Under-Lyne site and serves the students and staff of the college. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Children are cared for in two main rooms, in which they are grouped according to age. They have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, part of which is covered and part of which has a safety surface.

The pre-school may care for a maximum of 40 children from two years to five years at any one time. There are currently 23 children on roll, of whom 19 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school operates each weekday during term time. It is open from 08.30 to 16.15 on Monday to Thursday and from 08.30 until 15.15 on Friday. There are nine staff employed to work directly with the children, eight of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. The pre-school is commencing the quality assurance scheme, Aiming for Quality. They receive support from the local authority

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating outdoor experiences. They access the outdoor area freely and many choose to spend much of their time each day in the fresh air. Staff promote well planned opportunities for robust physical exercise. Children climb confidently and with agility on the large climbing frame and wooden train, they bounce on the space hoppers and build their own 'balancing beam obstacle courses'. They clamber on the crate bridge over the 'pretend sea' and love being pulled along on the 'elephant's trunk'. They learn to negotiate the rope ladder and the climbing wall. They ride the cars back and forth on the marked roadway. Staff interact skilfully to support children's mastery of new skills, so that they use their bodies with pleasure and confidence. Children relish their time outdoors and enjoy many imaginatively planned activities in all weathers. Access to appropriate clothing, whatever the weather, allows them to choose and gain great pleasure from outdoor play throughout the year.

Staff implement health and hygiene procedures effectively, ensuring they fully meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children are helped to understand why good hygiene practices are important, increasing their ability to manage their own personal care. For example, they visit the toilet independently and learn about why they must wash their hands carefully. They talk about the importance of cleaning teeth after eating sweet foods. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that arrangements for first aid and administering medication are clearly agreed in writing with parents.

Snack and meal times are planned as relaxed and enjoyable, social occasions. They are used very successfully to maximise opportunities for social development. The pre-school provides a range of nutritious and attractively presented snacks that appeal to children's preferences and meet their individual dietary needs. Snack time menus promote opportunity for children to explore new tastes, for example with foods from other cultures. Children sometimes visit the local market to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, and help in snack preparation as part of a planned activity. They enjoy being monitors and tidy away their own plates and cups after eating, but they are not fully involved in the daily routine of snack time. For example, they do not help to set the tables, mop up their own spills or pour their own drinks. Staff raise children's awareness of healthy foods in everyday conversations, but do not actively engage with parents to promote healthy lunch boxes.

Supportive, caring interactions encourage children's all round development. Staff liaise very closely with parents, so that they are alert and responsive to individual needs. Children's emotional well-being is fostered; they are made to feel very special and important, cared for by staff who know them very well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are thoroughly safe and secure in the child-friendly environment. Risks, both indoors and out, are identified and minimised, without limiting challenge. Use of space is very effectively organised to allow children to move around safely, freely and independently. Children's safety and welfare are enhanced by careful supervision, helping them to use the well-planned space purposefully and with confidence. A wide and well-balanced range of high quality resources is stored at child height, so that children can select them without help. Staff are meticulous in

ensuring all areas are safe and practice is consistently monitored. This increases children's safe and independent participation.

Staff use everyday activities well to help children learn about the importance of listening carefully to instructions. Children's understanding of safety issues is good because staff routinely discuss and reinforce limits and boundaries with them. They develop an awareness of safe practice, for example, they discuss why they should not walk around with chopsticks and or throw sand in faces. Children begin to understand the risks of running indoors and why spilt water must be mopped up quickly. Regular and well-planned outings help raise their awareness of road safety. Procedures to ensure safe evacuation in the event of an emergency are practised regularly with the children.

Protecting children and safeguarding their welfare is given high priority. Staff enable children to share their feelings and make their needs known. Parents are made fully aware of the responsibility of staff to protect children. Staff sensitively establish cooperative and very supportive working relationships with families. They are confident to record existing injuries and discuss these with parents. Appropriate incident recording procedures are clearly established. Staff are well informed about requirements relating to dealing with child protection issues, and are fully familiar with the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thrive in the welcoming and stimulating environment. Staff know them well and are highly attentive to their individual needs and interests. The pre-school is vibrant and inviting. The daily routine is, however, calm and relaxed, allowing children to absorb experiences at their own pace. Caring and attentive relationships nurture high levels of confidence and self-esteem in children, so that they are busy and contented. Children are enthusiastic and inquisitive, because staff provide a wide range of purposeful, exciting activities in the daily environment. Staff are confident to stand back and observe children in their play, knowing intuitively when to interact and offer support.

Staff discover children's current interests and resourcefully promote and extend their curiosity, making learning lots of fun. Children have time to explore independently, undisturbed in their play. They become immersed in a wide range of sensory and tactile experiences, as they role and shape dough, mix paints and put on the wet suits to wash the windows. The outdoor area provides a wonderland of exploration and stimulus for their imagination. They explore making different sounds as they speak through the tubes in the fence, ring the bells and bang on the pans. They make up games, speaking into their walkie-talkies as they steer the car with their 'pretend steering wheel'. They shovel the pebbles on the 'building site', wearing their hard hats and making notes on clip boards. They use many natural resources to enhance all aspects of their play. They make large structures, like spaceships and the three little pig's house, with boxes, tubes and blocks.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching helps children to make significant progress towards the early learning goals, because staff have a full understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how to help children to progress. Children are motivated to learn through the rich and varied experiences planned, which reflect their own interests. The environment is planned to allow children to come back to activities 'day in and day out', and

is successfully organised to promote their independent choices. Children show good levels of concentration with activities they enjoy. Staff interact skilfully with children, using open questions to stimulate their thinking. Children's behaviour is very good, as staff model skills effectively and consistently reinforce expected behaviour.

Staff introduce new language and children to recall events, so that the quality of children's questions and observations is enhanced. They learn to listen attentively. They recognise and begin to write their own name and enjoy activities to promote their interest in sounds and rhymes. Children love reading stories and share lively, interactive story times. Their imaginary and exploratory play is stimulated well by stories. Factual books are used well as stimulus in everyday play and children enjoy making their own books. Their interest in number, shape and size is prompted well within everyday, practical play experiences. For example, they match the numbered bikes to the correct parking bay, and sit on different shapes mats for group time. They explore how to make cars go faster down the slope or the tube. Staff encourage children to explore and solve practical problems in their construction play.

Children spend much of their day outdoors, which excites their interest in the natural world and changing seasons. They dig with real tools in their vegetable garden, rake up the leaves and search for mini-beasts. They enjoy nature walks and made a book about their 'Scrunchy, Crunchy Autumn Walk'. They wondered how animals hibernate under leaves, observed poisonous red berries and discovered 'baby slugs hiding in an empty conker shell'. They are fascinated by ice and frost in their playground. Children use the computer with concentration and are becoming skilled at taking photographs.

Staff have established comprehensive systems to observe and assess each child's progress, using both spontaneous and planned observations. Activities are well matched to children's learning needs, so that their interest is sustained. Children's progress is linked to the stepping stones. Staff have very regular opportunities to share their observations of children's individual needs and progress. They systematically use their observations to inform the planning process, to ensure that all children are consistently challenged and their learning extended.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very much valued and recognised as individuals. They receive a warm and personal welcome and are fully supported by sensitive interactions with staff, who follow their lead and actively support their personal choices. Support for children's additional needs is a significant strength of the pre-school. Staff give high priority to communication issues, for example, by emphasising the 'language pyramid', by effective use of signing and using pictorial planning. The pre-school has also developed an excellent working relationship with the translation services within the college. This enables staff to communicate fully with families for whom English is an additional language. They learn simple words to help provide support and reassurance in the child's home language. This helps to ensure all children are fully included.

Staff successfully create a fully participative environment, so that children capably and independently manage many of their own daily experiences. They sweep up sand and dry the slide with towels. They learn to share toys and manage turns using the timers. They help to tidy away the toys before lunch. Staff gently and consistently reinforce rules and boundaries, explaining and involving children actively, so that they understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable. Politeness, sharing and good behaviour are sensitively encouraged and warmly

acknowledged by praise and with a 'butterfly' on the reward chart. Children are always confident of support, as staff skilfully help them to resolve difficulties.

Visitors to the pre-school and regular outings stimulate children's awareness of their local community. Children access a good range of resources that promote positive images of diversity, including books, dressing up clothes and role play resources. They learn about different faiths, festivals and cultures in well planned activities. Some posters and signs in other languages are displayed but there are few dual language books and signs in the pre-school do not consistently reflect the languages children speak, like French and Polish. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have a close and effective working relationship with parents and carers, as they fully value parents' knowledge of their own child. They find out from parents what children enjoy, what they already can do and share ways to build on this. In a questionnaire, a parent commented that staff are 'wonderful and approachable', 'always willing to make time to discuss their child'. Regular newsletters and an information folder help to keep parents fully informed about pre-school issues. They are confident to raise any concerns. The complaints procedure is displayed, along with a suggestions box. The address of the regulator is not included in the policy. A record is kept of complaints, as required, although it does not currently include the outcome and action that was taken as a result of a complaint.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive daily feedback about what their child is doing and learning. They are encouraged to add their contributions to the development record and to share home experiences with staff, so that planning takes account of all their interests. Parents are well informed about both the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Excellent use of photographs, in both displays and development records, provides a vivid insight for parents into the activities their child enjoys. Parents are given suggestions, within the planned topic, of activities to do at home. Staff are imaginative in developing resource links with home, for example, a play dough activity bag. Planning for next steps in children's learning is discussed with parents, so that they are familiar with their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff in the pre-school have an excellent knowledge and understanding of children's needs and a high regard for their well-being. Children are completely relaxed and at ease in their care. Their care and learning are significantly enhanced by skilful organisation. For example, staff plan the use of space and resources very creatively to engage children's interest and promote their independent participation. They are alert to different needs, for example of children who attend only one session each week and have very well considered settling and transition procedures. Staff observe and follow children's interests, so that their deployment very effectively supports and enhances children's play and learning.

Leadership and management of the centre is good. The staff team is strong, committed and cohesive. The manager very effectively supports and develops a professional and reflective approach to practice. Staff have regularly planned opportunities to meet together and plan jointly for children's progress. They constantly evaluate their practice, but do not actively structure these evaluations in relation to their effectiveness in enhancing the outcomes for children. Staff have a very good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage', so that children make good progress in all

areas of learning. Systems to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals are clearly established. Staff recognise there is a need to consistently monitor the impact of routines, for example, the interruption of children's play by group snack time, on their opportunity to extend their play ideas.

Comprehensive and well-documented policies and procedures are shared with parents. Clear written agreements inform all aspects of pre-school practice. All required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place and is regularly reviewed and kept updated. Procedures to ensure staff suitability, for their induction, support and ongoing appraisal of skills and training needs are all robust and promote professional childcare practice within the pre-school.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to focus on enhancing planning for staff training and development. With regard to nursery education they were asked to provide older and more able children with additional opportunity for physical challenge.

There is a well established system of appraisal in place and regular individual supervision sessions are planned with staff. This allows systematic opportunity to monitor and evaluate staff development needs. Staff have well planned access to a wide range of training opportunities, which maintain and enhance their skill base.

Planning for children's physical play has been significantly enhanced by the refurbishment of the premises and provision of an exceptionally well planned outdoor play area. Children enjoy a wide range of appropriately planned physical challenges in their everyday play. They have access to large climbing equipment and open-ended resources which allow them to build their own obstacle courses and balancing beams. This enhances their confidence in their physical abilities and encourages independent exploration.

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.

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 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):

- plan to involve older children more actively in the organisation of snack time routines and engage with parents to promote healthy lunch boxes
- extend the procedure for recording complaints, to include the action taken and outcome, and include the full details of the regulator in the policy
- plan to reflect within the daily environment the diverse languages of children attending.

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):

- develop further the ways in which practice is evaluated, to reflect its effectiveness in achieving and enhancing the outcomes for children
- continue to monitor the impact of routines, like group snack time, on children's freely chosen play and opportunity to extend and develop activities.

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