

Inspection of Tom Thumb Nursery

12 The Avenue, Eastbourne BN21 3YA

Inspection date: 21 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle quickly on arrival and show curiosity to explore a broad range of activities set up for them to engage with. Staff have good relationships with children, providing warm and positive support. They regularly praise children when they practise new skills.

Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of what children need to learn. They prioritise work around children's personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills. This is because leaders and staff have noticed a lasting impact from the COVID-19 pandemic that directly affects children's development. As such, staff use this information to plan appropriate activities and experiences to counteract the impact and support children's learning and development well. For example, one staff member is assigned to specifically focus on children's emotional health and well-being. Small-group activities are set up for children to support them to explore their feelings. This helps children recognise how to cope with big emotions and contributes towards supporting their self-regulation skills.

Children and babies have plentiful opportunities to develop their communication and language skills. Staff encourage pre-school children to participate in group times and stories. Children confidently contribute what they can recall from much loved books, showing good levels of language. Furthermore, staff sing with gusto to babies and very young children, who delight in joining in with action songs.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders utilise a variety of strategies to self-evaluate the quality of the provision. For example, they conduct supervisions to identify training needs to support ongoing professional development. There are subsequent room checks to see the impact training has on staff practice. This contributes towards driving ongoing improvements to ensure children receive good-quality care and education.
- On the whole, staff demonstrate good teaching practice. They explain ideas to help children grasp new ideas and model skills to encourage them to practise how to do things for themselves. However, there are some minor inconsistencies where junior staff are not clear about the early years foundation stage (EYFS), yet are the named key person. This means they are unsure how children's individual learning needs can be met through planning and implementing effective educational programmes. Nevertheless, senior staff do have oversight of junior staff and ensure children are exposed to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- All children have a key person to meet their individual needs. A buddy system is

in place to provide continuity of care and education. However, less experienced staff who are still learning aspects of the role are given the responsibility of being a key person. At times, they are unsure how to fulfil this role. Despite this, they are supported by room leaders and senior staff who are available to offer support and guidance.

- Staff provide a good range of activities to promote children's physical development. For instance, staff model how to thread dry pasta quills onto pipe cleaners to make necklaces. Children demonstrate good levels of persistence and concentration when practising new skills. Staff recognise that providing a variety of opportunities to support children's fine manipulative skills will contribute towards muscle control for later handwriting.
- At times, children struggle with their behaviour and need support from staff to help overcome minor upsets between peers. Despite this, staff demonstrate a consistent approach in offering sensitive support to remind children about the rules of the setting. In addition, staff provide explanations about why rules are in place to keep children safe. This helps children understand how behaviour impacts themselves and others.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) monitors all children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCo ensures swift intervention is in place, with setting support plans that outline targets and strategies. Key persons implement these plans to help children catch up.
- Parents comment positively about the care offered to their children. Leaders have good parent partnership to provide parents with updates on children's progress. Furthermore, the setting offers a lending library scheme to support children's learning at home and share details with parents about e-safety. This provides information on how to keep children safe when accessing the internet. However, staff have yet to fully embed teaching children about safe screen time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and staff team undertake regular child protection training. Leaders speak to staff to check their knowledge on a range of safeguarding matters to ensure this is fully understood and embedded. This is to assure leaders that staff know how to recognise when a child may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to make referrals to agencies with statutory responsibilities and take immediate action to report any concerns. Furthermore, staff understand they can notify the local authority designated officer should they have concerns about a colleague's conduct that may put children at risk.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the support for junior staff so they have a robust understanding of the EYFS
- develop the key-person approach to ensure communication between senior and junior staff is consistent to meet children's individual needs
- extend work on e-safety to support children to learn about how to stay safe online and safe screen time.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2766973
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10319425
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	TOM THUMB NURSERY LIMITED
Registered person unique reference number	2766972
Telephone number	01323647630
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Tom Thumb Nursery re-registered in 2023. It is located in Eastbourne, East Sussex. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6.30pm all year round. A team of 17 staff works with the children, 13 of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications, including one who holds qualified teacher and early years professional status. The nursery owner has a foundation degree. Funding is accepted for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sherrie Nyss

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector went on a learning walk with the curriculum lead to establish the priorities for the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and daily routines to assess the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times during the inspection.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the curriculum lead.
- The inspector tracked children to establish what it is like for a child at the nursery.
- The inspector held a discussion with the manager in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of suitability and vetting checks, first-aid certificates and SEND support plans.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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