

Tower Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	136108
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Esther Harvey
Setting Address	Church Room, Thomas A Beckett Church, Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire, BS16 9RB
Telephone number	07855023461
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Registered person	The Trustees of Tower Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. 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?

Tower Playgroup opened in 1967 and operates from the church room of Thomas A Beckett Church in Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire. A maximum of 12 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 11.45, term time only. Children have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for early years education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school can support children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn adequate hand washing routines and personal hygiene. For example, they wash and dry their hands before snack time with little prompting from staff members. However, inappropriate hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing for children after they use the toilet. This includes using the same bowl of water. Therefore, creating the opportunity for the spread of infection. All staff hold a recent first aid certificate, which ensures appropriate action will be taken should an accident occur. Documents relating to accidents are correctly recorded and remain confidential and a sick children's policy reminds parents about the exclusion times for children from the group if they are ill. Staff have suitable knowledge of notifiable infectious diseases in order to report effectively to Ofsted.

Children enjoy physical indoor exercise to music, which enables them to develop their coordination and listening skills. However, the setting does not have a designated outside play area for children to use spontaneously. Children do not benefit from regular opportunities to enjoy fresh air.

Children gain from a healthy diet. They enjoy sitting together at snack time and eagerly eat snacks of fruit and raw vegetables such as carrots and apples, from brightly coloured plates. They enjoy drinking milk, and are helped by staff to pour it for themselves. Children have access to drinks during the session which are supplied by parents. Therefore, children's experiences are assisting in their choice of healthy food options.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in bright colourful surroundings. Staff greet children at the beginning of the session and make them welcome. New children are welcomed by staff and the children. Children have access to a range of toys and resources in the room, which are clean and appropriate for use. Children's work is displayed around the room as a means of recognising their achievements.

Children benefit from appropriate safety measures and staff members' attention to their safety. Sufficient measures are in place when taking children out on walks during the summer months. This includes staff taking a mobile phone with them as well as the register to use in the event of an emergency. Children's time of arrival and departure in the sessions are recorded accurately by staff members. A well used visitors book and secure premises ensures that children are protected from unexpected visitors. Children are encouraged to keep themselves safe as they enthusiastically take part in tidying away toys after use.

Staff members are aware of their personal responsibility to safeguard children. There are procedures in place in the event of a concern about a child. Parents are made aware of staff members' duty to protect children from harm through policies and procedures given to them when registering their child in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and happy in the small intimate playgroup, and new children blend into the routine with ease. Staff are welcoming to children and greet them all by name on entering the setting. Children play happily together and know each other well. They confidently sing a popular goodbye song at the end of the session. Children are able to choose what to play with from the toys and resources set out ready for them on arrival, although they have little opportunity to select toys for themselves from the good range of storage drawers within the room. As a result, children are not learning to be independent in their choice of resources. Children have time to relax in comfort on colourful beanbags in the book corner. However, children have little chance during the session to take part in energetic play.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and Learning is satisfactory. Children's learning is progressing adequately. Staff members' have some knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, not all staff record children's observations or assess children's abilities, or keep the information up-to-date. Therefore, not all children's progress has been fully recorded and the next stage of their learning identified. However, staff members who do, have identified a few of the children's learning progress and achievements, and these are linked clearly to the stepping stone assessments. As a result, some children are insufficiently challenged during the session and have limited opportunities to express themselves freely. Planning is adequate but does not always show how children's learning can be developed for them to reach their full potential. Children with learning difficulties receive support from other agencies where necessary.

Children enjoy role play using an imaginary outing, such as 'going camping'. This activity is used by some staff and extends children's vocabulary through such activities. Therefore, children are beginning to concentrate and be stimulated into learning through play. They eagerly draw on their own experiences in order to share the adventure with others. Children are developing good relationships with each other, and take responsibility for their personal care, such as using aprons when painting, and washing hands after messy play. Children are relaxed in each other's company and work together well in small groups. For example, they design a robot from connecting plastic tubes, and create pretend food from coloured play dough. Children are polite and know each other by name, they patiently wait for all to choose fruit at snack time before eating. Children's behaviour is appropriate, and managed effectively through the use of story books. Children are confident speakers and enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. However, there is little opportunity for children to regularly develop their literacy skills so that they can write and make marks for a purpose in their play. Children confidently count up to ten, and some can count further.

Children take pleasure in singing, and confidently stand up in front of the group to sing various nursery rhymes and carols such as 'Away in a manger'. Children have access to resources such as key boards and computers. They are skilful in the use of the computer mouse and one handed tools such as scissors. As a result, children are beginning to learn through play and develop their creative ability.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting. There is a slow induction for those children who are not able to settle immediately. Staff help children to fit into the playgroup routine. Children mostly behave well in the setting, they take turns and share, with support from some staff. The chairperson of the committee takes time to meet with new parents at the playgroup, she introduces them to staff and the children's routine. As a result, there is a sound relationship between parents, staff and committee in order to secure continuity of care for children. Children have experience of the wider world around them. They visit the local post office to post letters to Father Christmas, and are introduced to a collection of planned festivals throughout the year including Chinese New Year and Easter. Children take part in local events such as village revels, and participate in decorating the winning float. Children create models of their homes, and know their address and where they live. There is a sound connection between the local school and the playgroup. As a result, children are learning to be part of the community in which they live.

Children are confident and becoming independent. They are learning to put on their own coats and hats, and beginning to show appropriate levels of self-esteem. They enjoy sharing news about their home life, and listen to each other's experiences of holidays. Children have time to sit quietly in the book corner and relax. There are a good collection of books for children to read. The books are in good condition, and carefully chosen stories help children learn appropriate social skills, such as the effect their behaviour has on others. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties can be appropriately supported. The special needs coordinator is aware of where to find support, and can work with parents and other professionals who may be involved with the children's care.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents receive limited information regarding the Foundation Stage, the early years curriculum and their children's progress. A brief introduction is included in the new parent pack indicating the six areas of learning. The committee and supervisor have plans to increase the information and further explain how the Foundation Stage curriculum links in with the children's stepping stones assessment. However, information about children's progress is given verbally either when leaving children for the session or collecting children from the playgroup. As a result, parents have limited opportunities to confidentially discuss their children's progress with staff on a regular basis. Parents can be involved with their children's learning if they wish. This includes providing the staff with written information about their children's abilities at home using an 'All about me book' with space for photographs of parents, brothers and sisters. This can be used by staff as a starting point for children's stepping stones assessment records. A news letter informs parents about fund raising events and what new children are starting at the playgroup.

A complaint procedure is in place, and the process the playgroup will take in the event of a complaint, is made available to parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

Children's care and attention is supported by staff who are qualified and experienced. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed by the committee and up-dated to conform to new requirements. Documents are stored securely and most are available for easy access. This includes children's emergency and contact details. The daily register is recorded appropriately with times of children's arrival and departure noted. There is a system in place for checking that people working with children are suitable to do so. The operational plan is made available to parents, and the committee ensure this is reviewed annually. Committee meetings are recorded and made available to parents. The space for children to use is organised in order for them to move freely around the room during their play.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

There are appropriate recruitment procedures in place in the event of appointing new staff. An appraisal system for staff members is not part of the current regime. The parent committee are working together in order to manage the setting, and meet regularly to discuss many aspects of the playgroup, including fund raising and future aims. This includes, further training for staff members, implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and improved record keeping by staff. Staff have sufficient understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which is not always followed through in practice. For example, observations on children are not being regularly recorded for their learning to be monitored. However, the supervisor is committed to improving children's opportunities to learn to their full potential and is fully supported by the local authority

advisory teacher.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the provider agreed to ensure children are offered a healthy and balanced choice of snacks. A healthy diet is offered to the children which includes fruit and raw vegetables as well as breadsticks and brown bread and butter. The provider also agreed to ensure procedures are in place which provide children with privacy when they are changed. Staff ensure that children's privacy is maintained. As a result, children's health and privacy have been improved.

At the previous inspection the provider was asked to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing. There has been no improvement as children still share a bowl to wash their hands after using the toilet.

At the previous education inspection the provider agreed to develop the use of observations and assessments so that the next stage in children's learning could be identified and more able children challenged. Also the provider agreed to provide opportunities for children to practice writing for different purposes. The provider agreed to improve plans to show how more able children will be challenged, who will lead and evaluate the activity. The provider also agreed for staff to use observations, evaluations and assessments to inform future planning.

There have been some minor improvements. Children have access to some resources and activities in order to practice writing, but these are not regularly available. New forms have

been introduced for use by staff to record observations, evaluations and assessments of children's progress. However, these are not regularly recorded, and the more able children's records are limited. Any challenges set for the children are not consistent with their abilities. As a result, limited progress has been made since the last inspection with regard to the children's learning in line with the early years curriculum.

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.

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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):

- plan regular activities to increase children's physical development and an understanding of space and movement
- ensure appropriate hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing after children use the toilet in order to prevent the spread of infection
- increase learning and play opportunities both inside and out in order that children can take part in energetic play

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):

- encourage children to develop their literacy skills by providing regular planned opportunities to write and make marks for a purpose in their play
- develop planning to challenge children in order to identify their next stage of learning
- ensure parents are provided with all the information about the Foundation Stage and early years curriculum
- make sure observations on children are regularly recorded in order for their learning to be monitored as a means of assisting their progress

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