

Tower Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137372
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Inspector	Susan Linda Capon

Setting Address	Orpington Baptist Church, Station Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 0RZ
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Registered person	Tower Pre-school
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tower pre-school was registered in 1988. The pre-school is managed by a board of Trustees appointed by the church, including parent representation of children attending the group. A day to day pre-school leader is employed to manage the group. The pre-school is situated in church premises in Orpington in the London Borough of Bromley. The group uses a large hall and small hall with associated kitchen and toilet facilities. There is a secure garden available for outdoor activities.

The group operates from Monday to Friday between 09.20 and 12.20 for 38 weeks a year, during term-time only. Additional afternoon sessions are available on Tuesday and Friday between 13.00 and 16.00. Children attending come from the surrounding local community. They may attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is registered for 32 children between two and under five years at any one time. There are currently 53 children on roll. Of these, 39 children receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

A team of 10 staff work directly with the children, including the pre-school leader. Of these, nine staff hold a relevant NVQ2 or NVQ3 childcare qualification. The pre-school leader holds an NVQ4 childcare qualification. One staff member is currently working towards an NVQ2 and three staff are renewing their NVQ3.

The pre-school receives support from the local early years team and the special educational needs co-ordinator. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and free from infection. They know they wash their hand to "get rid of the germs" and clean their teeth after meals to help keep their teeth and gums healthy. All the children wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom, using liquid soap and paper towels. They understand the importance of washing their hands after touching the animals at the farm. Children blow their nose using a tissue, disposing of this safely in the readily available bin.

Staff implement the in-depth health and hygiene procedures for the majority of the time, keeping children free from infection and cross-contamination. However, hand-washing procedures after 'messy' activities requires improving, as children currently share the same bowl of water.

Staff use good nappy changing procedures, using disposable gloves and aprons, cleaning the mat before and after use help keep children safe. They clean all tables and work surfaces thoroughly between use with anti-bacterial spray and toilets are clean and suitable for children's use throughout the session.

Staff throw all spilt sand away, helping to prevent infection. Sand is regularly renewed to ensure children are free from risk of infection.

All staff and volunteers closely follow safe food handling procedures as they prepare snacks for the children and participate in cooking activities. They store, prepare, cook and serve all food appropriately to prevent cross-contamination and infection.

All children are safe through the safe procedures for medication and accidents fully implemented by all the staff team. Staff carefully label all required medication, storing it inaccessibly to the children. The first aid trained staff ensure the first aid kit is complete at all times. Staff share the detailed records with parents when required.

Parents do not bring their child to the setting if they are unwell, helping to prevent the spread of infection. Staff advise parents of any infectious illness through the parent's notice board and additional information is readily available, regarding incubation periods for childhood illnesses. Staff implement good procedures for managing children who become unwell at the setting. They carefully monitor the child while awaiting collection by the parent, keeping the parent updated about their child's condition.

All the children enjoy regular physical exercise indoors and outdoors. They particularly enjoy practising their climbing, sliding and jumping skills as they use the large apparatus each session.

Music and movement sessions instigate excellent opportunities for children to move imaginatively to the varied music. For example, they march like soldiers and 'fly' like butterflies.

All the children access fresh drinking water throughout the session through an easily accessible water jug and clean beakers. Staff remind the children to take additional drinks when the weather is hot to prevent dehydration.

All the children enjoy healthy snacks during the session. Each child brings a piece of fruit to share with the other children. Staff wash all fruit, cutting it into small pieces before offering it to the children. They cut grapes and Satsuma slices in half to prevent choking. Children pour their own milk or water developing their self-help skills. Squash or juices are unavailable to help keep children's teeth and gums healthy.

Children enjoy sitting together in small groups at the snack bar. This enables them to take their snack at a time to suit them while enjoying the social occasion and sharing their news or discussing their morning.

Staff are fully aware of every child's dietary needs, ensuring all children receive appropriate food in accordance with their parent's wishes. Children are discouraged from sharing their food with one another to ensure every child's safety.

Children are developing firm ideas about healthy eating and know fresh fruit and vegetables help to 'make them big and strong'. They enjoy various healthy eating activities incorporated into the curriculum. Staff skilfully supplement this as they play with the children, reinforcing their learning. For example, staff discussed suitable foods for breakfast after children suggested sweets.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work very hard each day to provide a very warm, welcoming, child-orientated setting for the children. They set up all the toys, equipment and information on a daily basis, making the premises their own. Children's work and posters are displayed extensively on the walls and also hang from the ceiling. Staff warmly greet every parent and child with a smile, making them feel welcome and part of the group.

The premises are well-maintained, bright, clean and well-ventilated throughout. Staff clean as they go, during the session. The children are encouraged to respect their surrounding and available equipment by helping to keep the area clean and safe during the session. They enjoy earning a sticker as a reward for their hard work while learning the importance of taking responsibility for the environment.

Children move around the premises freely and safely. Staff ensure sufficient space is available between each activity to help prevent unnecessary accidents. They remind the children not to run around the room and to pick up any dropped toys to prevent them hurting themselves.

Staff organise the available areas well, providing suitable space for children to play, enjoy 'messy' activities, physical play and quiet activities. Outdoor space is readily available for physical play and exploration of the environment.

Children enjoy an extensive range of toys, equipment and activities throughout the term. A broad assortment is available at each session suitable for the overall developmental need of

every child attending. Staff carefully select new equipment, ensuring it is suitable and safe for the children to use. Everything is available at a suitable height to ensure all children can make their own selection and choices.

Children use colourful low tables and chairs for small group activities. They enjoy the colourful sofa and matching seats in the book corner, making it a comfortable welcoming area for the children to read. The surfaces are easily cleaned, helping to prevent the spread of infection.

All staff fully implement the in-depth health and safety procedures at all times. All are fully aware of the potential hazards indoors and outdoors. They take personal responsibility on a rota basis to ensure the premises are safe, secure and suitable for the children at the beginning of each day. For example, all electric sockets are covered, chairs are stacked safely and doors are secure. Non-toxic paint and glue promote additional safety for the children.

Staff continue to regularly review risk assessments to ensure all areas are covered. They review the accident book to identify any potential hazards, addressing these areas to help prevent more accidents.

The play leader has carefully considered the addition of the recently added outdoor play area, ensuring it is safe and secure for the children to use. The daily check list ensures children use this area in safety at all times. For example, staff check the area for animal faeces or broken glass daily before use. Staff provide coats and Wellingtons to ensure every child has suitable clothes when using this area. Trees provide excellent cover during hot weather, protecting children from the hot sun.

All areas of the premises are extremely safe and secure. Staff implement the detailed procedures to ensure no unwanted visitors enter the premises at any time. Staff remind parents to close the double doors on leaving the premises to prevent children leaving unnoticed. All visitors sign in and out of the provision. Staff escort or supervise them at all times, ensuring they are never left alone with the children. All staff have a clear understanding, regarding who may or may not collect any child. They follow firm procedures to ensure children do not leave the premises with an unknown individual. For example, written consent from parents or use of a password if a different adult collects a child.

Staff carefully supervise the children throughout the session. They undertake regular headcounts particularly when moving the children between the two playrooms. Children hand their names to staff when they go for their snack, ensuring staff are fully aware of where each child is at any time.

Staff implement excellent emergency procedures, ensuring the children's safety at all times. Regular unannounced fire drills ensure all staff and children understand their personal role and responsibilities. Children learn to listen carefully to instructions. Staff assist smaller less able children on the stairway to prevent accidents. Detailed records identify any areas for improvement. Daily checks include ensuring all fire exits are clearly labelled, accessible and usable.

Many children are very aware of the dangers of matches as they celebrate a staff member's birthday with a candle lit cake. Staff discuss the dangers with the whole group, reinforcing the message and ensuring any new children are included.

Children are safe when participating in outings. High adult to child ratios ensure they are safe and secure at all times through good supervision. Staff undertake a full risk assessment, including

a visit to the venue prior to the event. Detailed procedures ensure the children's safety at all times. For example, staff explain the group rules to parents, ensuring they understand their personal role at the event.

Children benefit from the in-depth procedures implemented for child protection. Management have previous experience, knowledge and understanding of reporting any concerns for a child, keeping children safe at all times. Parents see the policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All the children participate in a well-organised curriculum of activities, incorporating Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage documentation. This ensures every child is included at a level to suit their individual needs.

The majority of children are extremely confident and secure in the setting. They enjoy attending, have made new friends and interact well with the staff team. A few new children are still finding their feet particularly when their parent leaves them at the start of the session. Cuddles and interaction from staff quickly resolve their concerns and they play happily for the rest of the session.

All the children are developing a good understanding of right and wrong. They know they must be kind to one another and share the toys and equipment. Staff are good role models for the children, setting them an excellent example to follow.

All the children access a wide range of suitable resources appropriate to their individual needs. The balance of adult led and free choice activities enables children to develop their independence skills throughout the session. For example, children make their own selection from the range of activities available.

Children observe all the children well. They promote next steps for progression for younger children using the Birth to three matters documentation.

All the children enjoy group story time. Younger children are enthralled as staff tell the story and older children enjoy discussing and predicting what will happen next. During the story about the bear they all knew the rubbish dump included would not smell very nice.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All the children are making excellent progress throughout all the early learning goals, meeting their individual potential. They are keen to attend and motivated to explore the available toys, equipment and activities. They confidently share their news in large, medium and small groups. For example, "I went on an aeroplane to Portugal". The majority are able to concentrate for long periods of time at an activity of their choice. For example, children spent 20 or more minutes building models at the junk modelling table, collage table or playing with the sand. They share their ideas as they play imaginatively in the hospital corner or at the sand-tray. All the children have good independence skills as they use the toilet unaided, pour their own drinks at snack time and put on their own aprons or dressing-up clothes. They are all developing a good understanding of other people and cultures.

The majority of children have excellent language skills, making themselves easily understood as they play together. They negotiate clearly with one another as they play with the sand. For example, children playing together agreed what to do next to the farm they were making. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes with a favourite being 'I'm a little teapot'. The children enjoy looking at books in the book corner with an adult or on their own. They handle books carefully and know print has meaning. Two children enjoyed the story 'So much' together. Other children confidently re-tell the story of the 'Three little pigs' recognising the story has a beginning, middle and end. Staff incorporate linking letters to sounds into the curriculum, enabling children to develop their awareness in this area. For example, children recognise words or things beginning with the letter of the week. Several children can write their own name, using recognisable letters in the correct order. Other children enjoy the various opportunities to make their marks as they develop their writing skills. For example, as they make their own tickets in the ticket office. They are learning new words as they discuss the parts of an aeroplane during transport week. For example, wings, tail and nose.

The majority of the children competently count to 22 when recording the number of children attending the group. They recognise this number is larger than 20. Children enjoy ample opportunities to explore numbers, recognising one to nine as they use different equipment and areas in the setting. For example, staff enhance these opportunities by providing numbers in the toilet area. Children enjoy simple subtraction tasks as they sing songs. For example, five brown leaves. Other children particularly enjoy the 'bottle game' guessing the number of the bottle removed correctly after standing them up in the correct order from one to 10. They use positional language as they line up for snacks or go over, under and through the large play equipment. Children discuss quantities as they play with large and small pieces of dough or check the highest and shortest tower built with the bricks. Most are fascinated as they learn the Jacobs ladder continues to remain the same number although it appears to get smaller. Children recognise a variety of shapes as they make a collage.

All the children have developed an excellent awareness of their world about them through various activities. They explore a wide range of resources through articles on the nature table. For example, conkers, pine cones and bread. Sand, water, paint, dough and glue are available on a regular basis. Children enjoy comparing wet and dry sand. They know they cannot sieve the wet sand. The children enjoy mixing colours together as they paint at the easel and constructing their own models at the construction areas. Many have learned how to secure their models using glue and sellotape. They competently use the computer to complete activities of their choice. Children particularly enjoy carrying out traffic surveys and learning how to keep themselves safe when crossing the road. Some children know the lollipop lady helps you cross safely and you must hold mummy's hand. They enjoy comparing different types of homes and visiting a building site.

All the children move confidently round the room as they play imaginatively and use the large apparatus. They have good spatial awareness, ensuring they do not collide with the other children as they march like a band. Many can competently pedal their bikes round the room. Children are developing an understanding of how their body works and know when they need a rest or a drink after physical exertion. Children competently use a wide range of large and small apparatus and equipment, enabling them to develop their large and small muscles appropriately. For example, cutting with scissors and screwing large construction piece together to make a model car.

Children use their imagination as they use a wide range of toys and equipment. They express themselves through free painting and drawing. They explore a wide range of natural textures

daily, discussing the differences as they play. For example, children recognised sandpaper is rough on one side and smooth on another. They make three dimensional models from various construction materials including junk. For example, a spaceship. Other children explain their aeroplane is a hurricane or spitfire. Children enjoy exploring sounds through music as they sing different songs and rhymes. They explore different sounds using the large range of musical instruments. Some children enjoy playing in the home corner designed as a hospital cheerfully telling their patient that the injection they will be giving them "may sting a bit". They recognise a wide range of colours and ably match the transport vehicles with their different coloured bowls. All the children enjoy moving around, shaking their colourful streamers to the song 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious'.

Staff plan a very varied, interesting and stimulating curriculum, using the early learning goals and stepping stones. A theme is followed each term. Plans are detailed, demonstrating how all the children are included, the staff role, equipment required and the aims and objectives of the activities. Staff briefly evaluate daily planning at the end of the session and a more detailed written account is completed for future use. All the staff skilfully build on the children's previous learning and development as they support their learning at the activities. They use open questions and discussion, enabling children to think for themselves whenever possible. Staff observe every child regularly, identifying the next steps for progression, ensuring each child's needs are incorporated into daily plans through discussion at team meetings. An additional comments book enables staff to bring any concern to the notice of the child's key worker or special needs co-ordinator, ensuring things are not forgotten. A detailed report is prepared for parents with room for parents' comments or discussion. Well-written profiles follow the child to school including photographs and artwork, demonstrating the child's progression through the pre-school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff implement the in-depth equal opportunities policy and procedures throughout every session. Every child is welcome and treated as an individual. Parents provide staff with detailed information about their child, identifying each child's individual needs. Staff incorporate each child's needs into the sessions, ensuring continuity of care.

Children attend from a range of cultures and backgrounds. The staff team embraces all the children's cultures as children learn about different festivals and traditions around the world. For example, children enjoy learning about Rosh Hashanah and exploring Islamic artefacts. They play with a wide range of toys and equipment, representing positive images for all areas of equal opportunities. Staff ensure individual needs are fully supported through suitable resources. For example, left handed scissors and positioning the computer at a suitable level for all children to use it safely.

Children enjoy learning about their local community and the world about them through a range of activities and visitors incorporated into the curriculum plans. Many enjoy attending French and Spanish classes confidently using the language they have learned. For example, children used Au Revoir and Bonjour appropriately. They all enjoyed seeing a parent's taxi and meeting the fire fighters.

New children settle quickly through the excellent settling-in procedures implemented by the group. Parents stay as long as they feel necessary when their child starts to attend, ensuring the child and parents feel secure and happy with the setting and staff. Individual key workers

enable each child to develop a good relationship with the staff and gain confidence and security in the environment.

Children with English as an additional language receive excellent support from the staff team, enabling them to feel secure in the setting. For example, staff use short, clear sentences for instructions and body or sign language. Notices around the playrooms are in different languages, enabling children to feel their language is valued. Parents also help staff by providing additional posters in their language when required.

Staff are fully conversant with the procedures for supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The special needs co-ordinator ensures all staff are well informed of any individual educational plans which are in place for specific children, updating them when changes are made. Staff work closely with the parents and other professionals, ensuring children are able to meet their full potential.

Staff ensure all children are included. For example special cream is readily available in place of soap if specifically required for a child. They incorporate the 'I can' programme into their weekly activities promoting children's language skills. Makaton signing enables all children to participate fully.

This is a positive approach. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All the children behave exceptionally well. They know the group rules, reminding one another to share the toys and equipment from time to time. They willingly co-operate with one another, take turns at games and share the equipment. Regular praise and encouragement promotes desirable behaviour, requiring staff to intervene on a very occasional basis. The group atmosphere is very calm, busy and harmonious.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents receive extensive information from the pre-school via the prospectus, newsletters and notice boards. Parents can be as involved as they wish in their child's learning and education. For example, they can be parent representatives on the management committee or help in the group on an occasional basis. They can share their views through attending the annual general meeting or using the suggestion box in the foyer. Staff are readily available to assist parents with any concerns, helping and supporting them to raise their child appropriately. For example, staff supported a parent requiring advice to help her child to share outside the group.

Parents are extremely happy with the staff team, finding them helpful, dedicated, friendly and polite. They all know their child's individual key worker and feel the staff enjoy being with the children. Staff keep parents regularly informed about their child's individual development and progress through daily verbal discussions and written end of term reports. Many parents have used the group for more than one child and would recommend it to their friends.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Suitable staff and regular volunteers care for the children. Rigorous employment procedures and the completion of criminal record bureau checks ensures children are never left alone with un-vetted staff. Good contingency plans ensure the required ratios of staff to children are always in place. New staff, students and volunteers receive good induction training through supervision and documentation.

The majority of staff are qualified to NVQ3 or above and many are renewing their qualification to ensure they keep abreast of changes to childcare practices. The manager holds an NVQ4 qualification. All staff take their role and responsibilities seriously and continue to update their skills through attending a range of additional training opportunities when possible. For example, all staff have completed speech and language training and promoting diversity through everyday play.

The staff team work well together complementing one another's skills and experience. They provide a high adult to child ratio at every session, enabling every child to enjoy some one to one care at some time. This enables new, less confident children to develop a good relationship with staff members and in turn grow in confidence within the group.

Staff are well-deployed throughout the session with each knowing their personal role and responsibilities. Rotas ensure everyone takes their turn at activities, enabling all staff to develop all round skills.

Children participate in excellent registration systems which ensure staff are always aware of exactly which children are on site at any time. Staff monitor the arrival and departure times closely, ensuring children are unable to leave unnoticed. They regularly update a whiteboard as children arrive and staff and visitors are included. However, staff do not currently sign in and out of the setting with arrival and departure times. This could be a hazard if an emergency arises.

The staff team maintain excellent, detailed records throughout. The well-written policies and procedures are readily available to everyone, ensuring continuity is achieved at all times. All records are securely stored with access on a 'need to know basis'. Parents only see the records relevant to their own child, maintaining confidentiality at all times.

The management keep Ofsted informed and updated of any changes as required. For example, they wrote to inform Ofsted of the new garden and staff leaving the setting. They keep abreast of all changes to the National Standards, ensuring everything required is in place. For example, a complaints record book is available for use when required and parents see a copy of the recent inspection report via the notice board.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The registered person is fully aware of her role and responsibilities as chair of the committee, ensuring the staff are meeting the National Standards at all times. She liaises regularly with the manager of the group and keeps the committee updated through regular meetings.

The manager is very aware of her personal role and responsibilities towards meeting the National Standards and providing good quality care and learning for the children attending. She ensures all children staff and families are well-supported at all times. The manager is a very positive, enthusiastic role model for her staff team. She has a thorough knowledge of how to promote good quality child care with the needs of the children being paramount. She ensures her staff team are well informed, fully supported through annual appraisals and training and development programmes. The manager has worked hard to improve the group, implementing high quality policies and procedures which underpin the children's development, progress and welfare. She continues to improve the setting through the addition of an outdoor play area and completing an accreditation scheme. Local schools have expressed their pleasure at receiving children into their reception classes who have all reached their individual potential, enabling them to settle into school more easily.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The staff team have worked hard to complete the improvements required following the previous inspection. They now have emergency information in place for all staff, ensuring contacts are up to date in case of need.

Additional equipment and activities are incorporated into the curriculum, promoting more opportunities for physical development and offering more challenge for older children in the setting.

Children enjoy more opportunities to develop their mark-making skills in a range of areas within the setting, enabling them to learn to write their own names competently.

Staff fully evaluate planning and children's observations. These are linked closely with the group's curriculum planning, providing for the individual needs of every child in the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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 outstanding.

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):

- improve the staff registration to ensure the group is aware of exactly who is on site at any time of the day
- improve the children's hand-washing procedures following 'messy' play activities to prevent cross-contamination and infection.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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