

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Appletree Day Care,
Garvagh

Report of an Inspection
in October 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Appletree Day Care
Address:	39 Tirkeeran Road Garvagh COLERAINE Co Londonderry BT51 5AX
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	10 October 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	15	-
in their immediate pre-school year	15	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	10	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
with English as an additional language	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	91%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	2	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
2½ hours	-	203

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	15
Percentage returned	53%
Number of written comments:	5

1. Introduction

Appletree Day Care joined the Pre-school Programme in 2011; it is situated in a refurbished building in the outskirts of Garvagh, County Londonderry. The pre-school room is part of the childcare centre. The leader and an assistant were appointed in 2010 and a third assistant took up her post in September 2012. The children attending the pre-school group come from the surrounding area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school room within the childcare centre.

The views of the parents and staff and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fifteen questionnaires were issued to the parents and eight were returned with five written comments. All of the responses indicated a very good level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the work of the pre-school group. In particular, the parents indicated their appreciation of the approachable and caring staff, and the organisation and management of the centre. There were four responses from the management group and three responses from the staff to the questionnaires; all were positive. The reporting inspector discussed any matters arising through the questionnaires with the leader, the manager and members of the management group who attended the oral report back.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the pre-school room is good. The pre-school room has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the setting's progress on the area identified for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are well-settled for the time of year they appear happy and enjoy making independent choices.
- During the inspection the majority of the children engaged in purposeful play; they co-operated well with one another and with the adults. A few of the children have limited attention spans and still require support and guidance from the adults.

- Most of the children are developing good vocabulary and conversation skills. They demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their learning environment through their participation in the daily routines.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The provision for pastoral care within the pre-school room is good. Among the strengths are the very good working relationships between the staff and the children and the caring and consistent approach adopted by all of the staff in engaging the children in purposeful play.
- The staff's interactions with the children are always good and, on occasions, very good when they extend the children's observational, problem solving and decision making skills.
- Since taking up their posts, the staff have worked hard to create a bright, clean and stimulating learning environment for the children. The children's work is attractively presented around the playroom.
- The short-term planning identifies an appropriate range of activities for the time of year, the age and stage of the children's development. A good start has been made to develop a systematic approach to observing the children at play and recording their responses. The staff have recently focused on promoting the children's language and communication skills. They are aware of those children who require further support. They now need to link their observations of the children's responses to their play more clearly into their future plans to ensure there is a sharper focus on learning, along with sufficient challenge and progression for all the children and their individual needs.
- The daily routine provides a valuable session of extended play along with appropriate time for story, rhymes and some physical play experiences. The children have many good opportunities to develop their independence, engage in conversations and acquire important social skills in an informal atmosphere.
- The staff in the pre-school room give good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, through the provision of a healthy snack. A wider range of energetic play activities in the secure outdoor environment needs to be provided throughout the year.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school room has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The staff have benefitted from extra non-contact time provided by the management group which has enabled them to develop a team approach to planning and assessing the children's needs. It will be important for the staff to continue to use this time to develop their understanding of the learning potential of the curriculum, to include planning for individual needs and to link the information gained from the observations more clearly to future plans.
- The staff have established good working relationships with the parents who are welcomed into the playroom. The leader has worked tirelessly to develop the provision to date and is a very good role model for both the staff and the children.
- Currently, the staff have the support of an independent early years specialist (EYS). The staff value her support she has provided regular visits and supported the staff in the creation of a stimulating learning environment for the children. The whole staff, the EYS and the management group now need to work more collaboratively to develop further the areas identified during the inspection.
- The staff have begun to evaluate the quality of their provision; they need to continue to develop their understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the pre-school group is good. The pre-school room has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The area for improvement includes the needs to:

- continue to develop the methods of planning and assessment to provide a broad and balanced programme of activities that progress throughout the year and meet the children's differing needs.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the progress on the area identified for improvement.

ACCOMMODATION

The staff should carry out a risk assessment for and review of the matted surface on the outdoor play area as the children are unable to use this area when the weather is wet, very windy or frosty. The children require more regular opportunities for outdoor energetic physical play throughout the year.

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