

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballinderry Playgroup,
Cookstown

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012

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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:	Ballinderry Playgroup
Address:	Ballinderry Parochial Centre Ballinderry Bridge Road Coagh COOKSTOWN Co Tyrone BT80 0AY
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	8 November 2012
Date of previous inspection:	15 November 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	26	-
in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		-
with a statement of special educational needs		-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
with English as an additional language		-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school		-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	95.6%	-

* 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	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	3

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	-	187

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned	54%
Number of written comments:	7

1. Introduction

Ballinderry Playgroup is accommodated within Ballinderry Parochial Centre. There have been a number of staff changes since September 2012; two members of staff are currently acting up in the posts of leader and deputy leader and two new members of staff have been appointed.

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 playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fourteen of the parents (54%) responded to the questionnaire and seven made additional written comments. There were six questionnaire responses made by the staff and the management committee and a small number of written comments. All of the parent, staff and management committee questionnaire responses were positive about all aspects of the playgroup. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the acting leader and the chair of the management committee.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Good Good Satisfactory
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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 and are developing positive attitudes to their learning.
- During the inspection, all of the children engaged in sustained and purposeful play. The children co-operate well with one another and the majority of them can take turns and share the equipment. Some of the children are beginning to engage in collaborative role play within the house corner. During the story time session the children listened attentively and joined enthusiastically in singing nursery rhymes.

- The children are confident in following the routines within the setting and display good levels of independence. The staff should now review some of the current routines, in order to extend opportunities for the children develop further their independence.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. The staff are very caring and there is a strong atmosphere of mutual respect among both the adults and the children. The children are very well-behaved and confident in engaging with the staff and visitors to the playgroup.
- The quality of the adult interactions with the children is consistently good. The adults respond effectively to the interests and needs of the children; they use praise effectively to celebrate the children's achievements and to promote their confidence and self-esteem. During the inspection, the adults were most effective in promoting the children's early mathematical language in a natural way across a range of activities including the water activity and during the snack time.
- There is a broad and balanced programme which provides good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. A good start has been made to developing a systematic approach to observing the children at play and recording their responses. The staff now need to develop further their planning and assessment methods in order to focus, more sharply, on the learning potential and the role of the adult for each activity. The observations of the children's responses should be linked more clearly to future planning, in order to ensure progression and challenge throughout the year for the children.
- The playgroup provides good support for those children who have been identified as having special educational needs and effective links have been established with outside agencies.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and have good opportunities for regular physical activity.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The new acting leader is committed to the continuous improvement of the playgroup and is a good role model in her own practice. The staff are developing a team spirit and are very supportive of the leader and of each other.
- There is an appropriate development plan with associated action plans in place within the playgroup; however self-evaluation processes are at an early stage of development. There is a need for the staff, with the support of their early years specialist, to develop further their understanding of the self-evaluation process, in particular, the need to collate evidence to inform their self-evaluation more fully.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following minor areas need to be addressed:
 - the acting leader and deputy leader need to access training for the role of designated and deputy designated person for safeguarding;
 - the policy for child protection needs to be revised and updated.
- The playgroup have established good links with the local Surestart provider and the local primary schools to ensure a smooth transition for children as they join the playgroup and then to prepare them for the next stage of their education. The playgroup enjoys good support from the parents and local community who have organised a variety of successful fund raising events.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the staff to develop further the planning and assessment methods, in order to focus more sharply on the learning potential and the role of the adult in each activity; and
- for the staff, with the support of their early years specialist, to develop further their understanding of the self-evaluation process.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

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