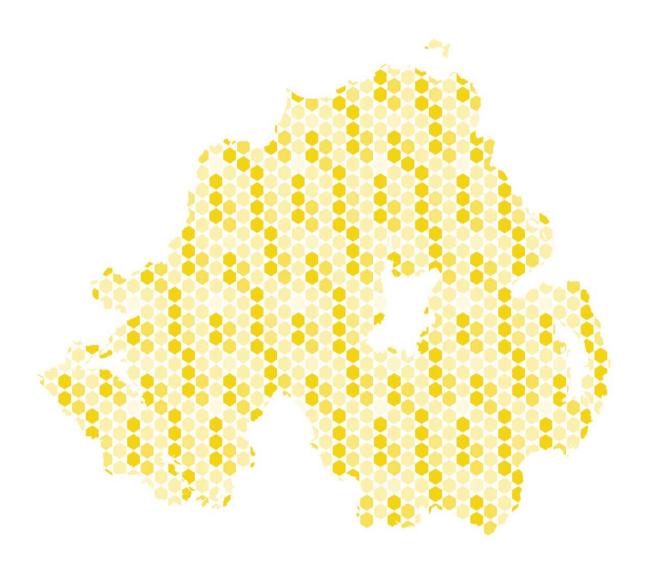
PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training Inspectorate

Ballycrochan Playgroup, Bangor

Report of an Inspection in January 2013



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:	Ballycrochan Playgroup
Address:	Ballycrochan Presbyterian church
	36A Silverbirch Road
	BANGOR
	Co Down
	BT19 6EU
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	30 January 2013
Date of previous inspection:	27 October 2005

Details of Children 1.

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	81	-
in their immediate pre-school year	81	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	38	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	38	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	4	-
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	187	-

- Special Educational Needs = fewer than five Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. <u>Details of Staff</u>

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	7	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. <u>Details of Sessions</u>

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
3 hours	2½ hours	187

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	38
Percentage returned	63%
Number of written comments:	12

1. Introduction

Ballycrochan Playgroup is located on the Silverbirch Road, Bangor, County Down. Since the last inspection in October 2005 the number of children attending the playgroup has increased significantly in response to the large preschool population in the area. Due to the increased number of children attending the playgroup a number of new staff members and volunteers have been employed.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from the scrutiny of 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. Thirty-eight questionnaires were issued to the parents, 63% were returned, twelve with written comments. Eight of the staff returned the questionnaire, six providing written comments. Five of the management group also returned the questionnaires and all included written comments. All of the responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work. In particular the parents and members of the management group praised the staff for their commitment and dedication to the children in their care.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Very Good
Quality of Provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good
_	-

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- Most of the children are very well settled and behave well. They relate well to one another, and some firm friendships are developing.
- The children display a good measure of independence and responsibility; they choose freely from the activities on offer. During the inspection, many good instances of concentrated play were observed. The staff are alert to those children who need additional support in order to develop their social skills and are quick to offer appropriate guidance.

 Many of the children are acquiring good manipulative skills using small tools such as scissors and pencils; as a result many of the children can produce detailed representational drawings and paintings; some are attempting to write their own names.

5. **Provision for learning**

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The playgroup has a very positive ethos based on good relationships at all levels. The staff provide a secure, supportive environment, which helps the children grow in confidence and independence. The playgroup is bright and stimulating; good use is made of a wide range of the children's art work, posters, photographs and interest areas to create colourful displays around the playgroup.
- The staff implement appropriate strategies to help those children who are slow to settle to play activities or share with their peers.
- The staff have developed an excellent snack routine for the children which encompasses all areas of the preschool programme and which progresses the children's learning and skills steadily over the year. The children demonstrate excellent independence and self-help skills as they engage in the snack routine. The children have regular opportunities to engage in outdoor play in addition to having access to a good range of indoor physical activities in the large hall.
- The planning outlines a broad, balanced programme for the children, designed to
 foster their all-round development. It identifies many facets of learning inherent in
 the various aspects of play. A good range of themes and topics is used to
 introduce a variety of interesting activities in all areas of the pre-school
 curriculum.
- The staff have developed an appropriate method of recording their observations
 of the children's responses to play. More use needs to be made of the staff's
 observations to inform the future planning to meet more fully the needs of
 individual children.
- The staff provide the children with sustained support during play; their interaction and involvement with the children is of a high quality. They encourage the children to observe and to think; they engage the children in valuable discussions about their play and their experiences. The staff need to reduce the adult to child ratio to ensure that children are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their peer negotiation and problem solving skills without over direction from the adults.
- The playgroup's programme promotes effectively the children's personal, social and emotional development. The range of activities provided offers good or very good opportunities for learning in all the other areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- Imaginative play and constructional materials are used effectively to promote early mathematical ideas. The staff use appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play and promote an interest in pattern making, counting, matching and making comparisons.

 Good provision is made for the children with special educational needs. The children identified as having special needs are well integrated into the activities provided. The staff make very good efforts to identify, address and monitor the particular problems faced by these children

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The leader has a high level of professional competence, is a good role-model for the staff and exerts a significant, beneficial influence over all aspects of the playgroup's work. All of the staff are hard-working and dedicated; they co-operate well as a unified team. with a shared view of the curriculum
- The children transfer to a large number of different primary schools. There is close liaison with the teachers at key stage one to ensure that the children make a smooth transfer to the year one classes. Relevant information about the children's progress is passed on to each of the primary schools to which the children transfer.
- The staff have started to develop the process of self-evaluation and together they have identified appropriate areas for further development, however, this is at a very early stage of development.
- The support provided to the staff by the current independent early years specialist is good. She now needs to focus, however, on the areas identified by the staff for development and to support them to develop and embed the self-evaluation process.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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