

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballygawley Early Years,
Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Ballygawley Early Years
Address:	Fairfield House Playing Fields BALLYGAWLEY Co Tyrone BT70 2HD
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	6 June 2011
Date of previous inspection:	28 February 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	19	16
• in their immediate pre-school year	19	10
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	19	10
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	0
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
• with English as an additional language	1	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	92%	87%

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	2	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: **	
Students	1
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
3 hours	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	33
Percentage returned:	42.4%
Number of written comments:	5

BALLYGAWLEY EARLY YEARS CENTRE, BALLYGAWLEY, CO TYRONE, BT70 2HD (5AB-0205)

1. Ballygawley Early Years Centre is located off the main street in Ballygawley and provides two part-time sessions daily. Since the last inspection there has been a change in the leadership and the assistants. The staff follows a HighScope approach to planning their work.

2. 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.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are friendly and at ease with the staff who support them well in their learning. Almost all of the children display a positive attitude to learning and demonstrate very good progress in their overall development. During the inspection, the children were observed playing imaginatively and productively in the distinct, well resourced play areas and often engaged in lengthy periods of concentrated, productive and co-operative play. The children demonstrate good levels of independence in attending to their own needs and are keen to discuss their experiences and express their ideas in group situations such as snack time and small group time.

4. The staff has worked hard to create a very attractive indoor and outdoor environment for the children and good use is made of the areas for play to promote language and learning. The children's art work is celebrated throughout the centre and themed books and interest areas help to arouse curiosity and to stimulate interest and imagination. The children show a very good interest in mark-making and can produce representational work of a high standard.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a high standard and, on occasions, is outstanding; the staff uses every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. Throughout both sessions the staff engaged purposefully with the children, listened to them and built effectively on their ideas and interests. In the best practice observed, they encouraged the children to recall, predict and problem-solve and used mathematical language in a very natural and incidental way. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable ensures the sessions flow smoothly and that all of the time is used well for learning.

6. The staff follows the HighScope approach to planning and take account of a variety of themes and the children's interests to provide a varied programme. More attention needs to be given to planning for progression in the activities. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded and assessed and the information is used to inform future planning and is also shared with the parents.

7. The playgroup provides very good early identification of and support for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. Effective links have been established with appropriate support agencies, for example, the speech therapist who has worked closely with the staff on occasions in addressing the difficulties experienced by some of the children. There is evidence to show, that as a result of the programme of support provided, the children make good progress.

8. A variety of effective methods such as an information booklet, regular newsletters and a parents' noticeboard have been designed to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the playgroup and highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. Very good links have been established with the local feeder primary schools with an appropriate emphasis on smooth transitions for the children.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere based on good working relationships at all levels.

10. The playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

11. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have, for example, access to healthy daily snacks and they have regular opportunities to play outdoors and engage in a range of energetic physical activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader manages the playgroup very effectively. She is a very good role-model and promotes a strong sense of team-spirit among the staff who shares her commitment to ongoing improvement and development. All of the staff contributes to the good standards achieved by the children. The management committee are highly supportive of the staff in their work and committed to the future development of the playgroup.

13. Although the process of self-evaluation is at an early stage, the staff are very reflective in their work and have appropriately identified this as an area for further development. A three-year development plan ensures that additional priorities and targets for future development are identified. The staff report that they have very good working relationships with the early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) who has identified appropriate areas for development.

14. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the caring, friendly ethos based on very good working relationships at all levels;
- the consistent high quality of the interactions between the adults and the children;
- the very good learning opportunities provided in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the comprehensive methods of planning and assessment;
- the very good support provided for the children identified as requiring additional help with aspects of their learning; and
- the very effective leadership and management demonstrated by the leader and the commitment of all the staff to the welfare of the children and the ongoing development of the playgroup.

15. 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.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fourteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and five made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were wholly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the level of care and dedication of the staff, they indicated how their children enjoyed the playgroup and recognised the progress they were making. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were also wholly positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the centre.

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