

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bo-Peep Corner Pre-School
Playgroup, Bangor

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Bo-Peep Corner Pre-school Playgroup
Address:	St Gall's Community Hall St Gall's Church 171 Crawfordsburn Road BANGOR Co Down BT19 1BT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	1 June 2011
Date of previous inspection:	1 November 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school centre	33	-
in their immediate pre-school year	18	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
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	92%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	5
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	5
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

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
2¾ hours	-	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned	78%
Number of written comments:	6

BO-PEEP CORNER PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, BANGOR, CO DOWN, BT19 1BT (4AB-0165)

1. Bo-Peep Corner Pre-school Playgroup is situated in a church hall in the grounds of St Gall's Parish Church. The children who attend come from a wide catchment area. Most of the children are in their immediate pre-school year. Since the last inspection in 2004 there has been a number of staff changes including a change in the early years specialist (EYS) support from the Early Years Organisation (EYO).

2. In the areas inspected the quality of education 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 playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children settle quickly to play and almost all maintain sustained and concentrated play for most of the session. They often engage in collaborative and well developed imaginative play and have good levels of confidence and independence. A small number of children show a preference for solitary or less focused play; the staff are aware of the needs of these children and generally offer good support. At times, the children need to be encouraged more consistently to complete tasks and take care of their environment by tidying up when they have finished at an activity.

4. Most of the children have very good language skills and enjoy talking with the staff and each other about their activities and experiences. Many show an interest in books, stories and mark making and can recognise and write their own names. The children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. A few children would benefit from more targeted support to build their confidence in talking and more needs to be done to ensure the boys are engaged more fully in mark making.

5. Many of the children show a keen interest in exploring materials through their senses at, for example, the water tray, interest area and the real vegetables provided in the home corner. These experiences could be enhanced further through more regular and well planned use of the outdoor area. The children make very good use of the creative area to make models and there were many very good examples of imaginative play in the home area and the hairdressers. Many of the children show a good awareness of number, shape, measures and can sort and count with confidence.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6. The staff set up an attractive and stimulating range of activities on a daily basis. The programme provides a long period of freely chosen play and a balance of suitable group activities. The organisation of the day and the management of transitions between sessions should be reviewed and amended to ensure it meets more fully the needs of all the children.

7. The staff plan a wide range of interesting experiences for the children which provide good opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff identify the learning to be promoted and make some useful evaluations. The records of the children's achievements show progress in the children's learning and identify areas where they need additional support. These processes should be used more fully to adapt the weekly planning to the children's needs and interests and to provide more specific support for individual children.

8. The staff have good informal relationships with the parents and provide them with useful information on the running of the playgroup and on their child's progress. More information should be provided about the pre-school curriculum and how parents can work with the staff to develop their child's learning and development at home. There are good pastoral links with the primary schools to which most of the children will transfer.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this playgroup is good. The strengths include the happy, well settled children and the children's very good behaviour.

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 good attention to promoting healthy eating through the provision of the healthy breaks and through topics within the curriculum. While the children have access to physical play each day the space available indoors is limited. More needs to be done to develop better opportunities for regular energetic physical play on a regular basis both indoors and outdoors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader is well organised and hard-working and the staff all support one another through the session. They have attended a wide range of training in recent years. The EYS support provided through the EYO has been inadequate in the previous year due to lack of staff; the playgroup staff report that previous support was satisfactory. The new EYS is in the early stages of developing her role within the group. The fluctuations in the staffing in recent months and the lack of continuity in EYS support in the months prior to the inspection have impeded some areas of development. The development plan identifies some suitable areas for continuous development; it should now be amended in light of the inspection findings and implemented systematically with the support of the management committee and the EYS.

13. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the stimulating learning environment which provides a wide range of learning experiences for the children;
- the many examples of sustained and concentrated play and the children's good behaviour;
- the many examples of effective staff's interaction which promote the children's language and learning;
- the good opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum, and in particular the children's language and well developed imaginative play;
- the good progress being made by most of the children; and
- the staff's commitment to their ongoing professional development and the strong team approach.

14. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop a more challenging and energetic physical play programme; and
- make more effective use of the assessment information and weekly evaluations in tailoring the programme and targeting support to the needs and interests of individual children.

15. In the areas inspected the quality of education 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 playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for 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 six made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the caring staff and the good progress being made by their children. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires indicated a strong commitment to the care and learning of the children.

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