

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bright Sparks Pre-School,
Crawfordsburn

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:	Bright Sparks Pre-School
Address:	Crawfordsburn Primary School 4, Cootehall Road Crawfordsburn BANGOR Co Down BT19 1JA
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 November 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	20	14
in their immediate pre-school year	20	0
funded by Department of Education (DE)	20	0
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	0
with a statement of special educational needs	1	0
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
with English as an additional language	0	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	95%	N/A

* 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	3	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	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	2½ hours	184

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	20
Percentage returned	55%
Number of written comments:	6

1. Introduction

Bright Sparks Pre-school playgroup is situated in purpose-built mobile accommodation located in the grounds of Crawfordsburn Primary School, Bangor. Most of the children who attend the playgroup come from the local village and surrounding area. The playgroup opened in October 2007.

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.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty questionnaires were issued to the parents and eleven were returned with six written comments. Most of the responses indicated a very good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, they appreciated the approachable and caring staff and they valued the very good range of play activities provided for the children. All members of the management group and staff responded to the questionnaires; all were very positive and emphasised the dedication of the staff. The reporting inspector discussed a few matters raised through the questionnaires with the leaders and the 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 playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

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

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Good Very Good Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children settle quickly to the learning activities provided by the staff. They are highly motivated, respond positively to the adults' high expectations of behaviour and engage confidently and enthusiastically in discussion about their play.

- The children pay close attention during the story session and explore information books during their play. They talk about, and are beginning to understand, early concepts of number, size, quantity and shape.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is very good. It has a very positive ethos with a clear sense of purpose: the working relationships at all levels are very good.
- The staff's interactions with the children are consistently of a very good quality. There is strong encouragement for the children to develop an interest in books. The members of staff make very good use of the play opportunities to develop the children's mathematical skills and they use appropriate questions to extend and develop the children's understanding of early counting, matching and making comparisons.
- The planning outlines a broad, balanced programme for the children and offers very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff has identified appropriately the need to develop further the assessment approaches in order to ensure that there is adequate challenge and progression in the children's learning opportunities throughout the year.
- The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, through the provision of a fruit break and healthy drinks. The children have regular access to a very good quality of outdoor, energetic play.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The leader and the members of staff demonstrate highly effective teamwork; they are well organised, enthusiastic, reflective pre-school practitioners. The current action plans identify the extension of the outdoor physical play programme and the ongoing review of their assessment and planning methods. The inspection findings concur with these areas.
- The staff of the playgroup benefit significantly from the guidance of the early years teacher from the local primary school when planning for the playgroup's ongoing development. The Principal of the local primary school also provides valuable advice to the playgroup regarding the continuous improvement of the provision.
- Based on 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.

CONCLUSION

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

The area for improvement includes the need:

- to develop further the system of observations to meet the individual needs and interests of the children.

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

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