

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Crawfordsburn Playgroup,  
Bangor

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2012

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of playgroup centre:</b>	Crawfordsburn Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church 376 Belfast Road BANGOR Co Down BT19 1UH
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	3 May 2012
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	20 January 2005

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the playgroup centre	33 (total) 24 (in each session)	-
in their immediate playgroup year	17	-
funded by Department of Education	18	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
with a statement of SEN*	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	2	-
with English as an additional language	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	87%	-

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
2½ hours Monday 3 hours Tues-Friday	N/A	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned	59%
Number of written comments:	6

## **CRAWFORDSBURN PLAYGROUP, BANGOR, CO DOWN, BT19 1UH (4AB-0509)**

1. Crawfordsburn Playgroup operates in Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church, Belfast Road, on the outskirts of Bangor, County Down. The same staff team was in place at the time of the last inspection in January 2005. The playgroup operates one part-time session for pre-school age children who come from the surrounding local area.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children are relaxed and confident. They demonstrate high levels of motivation and focus and settle quickly and enthusiastically to their chosen activities. The children's behaviour is excellent; they relate attentively and respectfully to each other and co-operate very well in sharing their resources and toys. The children demonstrate very good independence and resilience across all aspects of their learning and are keen to talk about, and to show, what they are doing. They move freely amongst the various play areas and engage with high levels of interest for sustained periods. Almost all are confident in making independent choices from the stimulating range of materials, books and equipment provided. Overall, the children are making excellent progress in their development in relation to their age and the time of the year.

4. The carefully planned programme is broad and balanced and takes very good account of the children's interests and their stages of development. The children show very good progress in all aspects of their developing language. The adults encourage the children to develop a curiosity in a wide range of stimulating print based resources, including familiar environmental labels and captions presented in context. In addition, the children select freely from an appealing selection of story and fact books placed thoughtfully both in the reading area and in the context of current topics in the other learning areas. The children demonstrate excellent listening skills and pay close attention during story sessions. All of the children participate enthusiastically in action songs and rhymes. Many of the children show an interest in mark making, and some are beginning to annotate their drawings with individual letters and simple representations of words to communicate meaning. The children engage very well in, and enjoy, extended periods of imaginative play. They express their creative ideas well using a very good range of materials; their art work and models are highly valued and displayed attractively around the playroom. The staff use appropriate mathematical language consistently when participating in the children's free play and organised activities; as a result, many of the children show an early proficiency and interest in counting, sorting and making comparisons using the appropriate vocabulary well. Many of the children engage purposefully with measuring tools in various aspects of their play; they explore and investigate a wide range of natural materials and demonstrate a keen interest in their environment. For example, during the inspection, the children's attention was captivated by close observation of some stick insects and they were able to extend their learning through positive engagement with attractive books on the topic.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The dedicated staff work hard and operate very skilfully as a team to secure the best possible outcomes for all of the children. There is a very welcoming and purposeful atmosphere within the playgroup and relationships between the staff and the children are excellent. The adults create a carefully planned and stimulating learning environment and, through the consistently high quality of their interactions with the children, promote and

develop effectively the children's confidence, language, thinking skills and independence. The children understand and respond very positively to their well established routines and transitions throughout the day; these routines such as snack, tidying up and self-registering promote the children's decision-making and self-management skills.

6. The written planning outlines an appropriately broad, balanced and connected curriculum for the children. The adults know the children very well and they carefully and systematically record and assess the children's learning and progress, using a combination of thoughtful observations, samples of work and photographs; this ongoing assessment is used well to inform future planning, meet the individual needs of the children and is shared with the parents.

7. The communication and links with the parents are excellent. The playgroup provides the parents with comprehensive information about the curriculum through, for example, the detailed monthly newsletter, the provision of a good range of pertinent support resources and the highly informative playgroup website. In addition to the informal meetings which occur at the beginning and end of the day, the parents receive detailed information regularly about their child's progress during the year. The playgroup also maintains very good links with the local feeder primary schools which supports and strengthens the arrangements for smooth transitions for the children. In addition, the staff team make very creative use of a wide range of interesting visitors and this enriches further the quality, variety and extent of the children's learning experiences.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The strengths include the excellent working relationships at all levels and the care and attention given to meeting the individual needs of all the children, the parents and the staff. A wide range of appropriate policies and procedures are operated with care and these are kept under regular review by the staff and the management committee.

9. 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 reflect the guidance issued by the relevant department.

10. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and developing early understanding about healthy lifestyles and physical activity. Some examples of this are the provision of healthy snack choices, the focus placed on the children's independence in personal hygiene routines such as hand-washing and the regular opportunities for the development of the children's physical skills in the adjacent large hall.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The dedicated leader provides outstanding leadership and management of the playgroup. She is purposeful and innovative in her approaches and, in collaboration with the rest of the highly skilled team, has worked diligently to improve further all aspects of the playgroup's provision. The staff and members of the management committee work together as a committed team and share their skills to bring about the best possible outcomes for all of the children.

12. There is a strong culture of reflection and self-evaluation in all aspects of the playgroup's provision and clear evidence of continuous improvement. The development plan (DP), which is reviewed regularly, identifies appropriate priorities and actions for future development. The staff receive support from an early years specialist (EYS) employed by the Early Years Organisation (EYO); they report very good working relationships with and helpful support from their EYS.

**13. The key strengths of the playgroup include:**

- the confident, highly motivated and focused children who settle quickly and enthusiastically to their play;
- the carefully planned programme which is broad, balanced and connected and takes very good account of the children's interests and their stages of development;
- the outstanding quality of the arrangements for pastoral care;
- the consistently high quality of the staff's interactions with the children, which promotes and develops effectively the children's confidence, language, thinking skills and independence;
- the excellent range of links the playgroup has established with the parents, local schools and a wide range of outside agencies; and,
- the outstanding leadership and highly effective teamwork provided which promotes continuous improvement across all aspects of the playgroup's provision.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup 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 members of the management committee and the staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Approximately 59% of the parents responded to the questionnaire; almost all indicated that they are very pleased with the quality of the overall provision within the playgroup. Written responses received from the parents show that they value the high levels of care, hard work and dedication shown by the staff to meeting their children's needs. The responses from the playgroup staff and the management committee also fully endorse the work of the playgroup. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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