

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Crumlin Integrated Playgroup,
Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection
in January 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of playgroup centre:	Crumlin Integrated Playgroup
Address:	27 Mill Road CRUMLIN Co Antrim BT29 4XL
Management Type:	Voluntary
Date of inspection:	11 January 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the playgroup centre	16	-
in their immediate playgroup year	11	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	11	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
with English as an additional language	**	-
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	N/A	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

** Represents a number less than 5

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

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
3¾ hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	11
Percentage returned	81.8%
Number of written comments:	**

CRUMLIN INTEGRATED PLAYGROUP, CRUMLIN, CO ANTRIM, BT29 4XL (3BB-0573)

1. Crumlin Integrated Playgroup is accommodated within Crumlin Integrated Primary School. The leader and one assistant have been in post since the opening of the centre in September 2010. An additional assistant took up her position in the week prior to the inspection.

2. In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are well behaved. They settle quickly to their chosen learning activities and many of them demonstrate good levels of engagement, concentration and perseverance. They are developing turn-taking and self-management skills. A few of the children are beginning to work together collaboratively; however, many still engage in solitary play.

4. During the inspection, there were good opportunities for children to enjoy stories and rhymes in small groups and also as part of regular adult-led activities. A small number of children also enjoyed browsing through books independently in the book corner. The provision of paper and writing tools generates the children's interest in experimental writing; however there were insufficient opportunities for the children to label their work independently. A majority of the children engage well in discussions with the staff and speak with developing fluency and clarity.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff work hard on a daily basis to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment for the children. There are distinct areas for play and good use is made of all the available space in the playroom. The daily timetable is well-organised and provides a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. The snack-time routine is organised informally and provides good opportunities for the children to develop independence. The children have the choice of staying in the centre for an additional 45 minutes in order to have a packed lunch or school dinner. The current arrangement of bringing the children to the school dining hall at this time is not appropriate for their age and stage of development and does not provide them with the opportunity to engage with the staff in conversations and acquire important social skills in an informal family-style environment.

6. The quality of the staff interactions with the children was always satisfactory, often good and on occasions very good. In the best practice, the staff used the opportunities for learning effectively and employed good questioning to encourage the children to think and extend their vocabulary. All staff were successful in promoting a sense of enjoyment in learning.

7. The staff have made a valuable start to developing the written planning for indoor play. The staff evaluations of the daily sessions indicate that they make appropriate minor changes to the planning in response to the needs and the interests of the children. Assessment observations of the children are also beginning to inform the weekly plans. The

staff use their observations of the children well to identify early any additional learning or behavioural needs that the children may have and carefully monitor their progress. Having made a number of changes to the planning format, it is appropriate that the staff have identified the need to review and evaluate how well it guides the adults to improve the quality of their interactions with the children. Planning for outdoor play is currently at a very early stage and it will be important for the staff to identify the learning opportunities across all the areas of pre-school curriculum in the outdoor area and to organise and use more effectively the resources currently available.

8. The centre's educational programme offers satisfactory to good opportunities for learning in all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The points which follow illustrate specific aspects of the programme.

- Careful attention is given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. The children are able to make independent choices and can access the resources they need. Instances of disagreement between the children are handled sensitively and time is taken to ensure that there is a positive outcome and that the children understand the effect that their actions have on others.
- The staff use a variety of relevant themes and topics to develop the children's understanding of the world around us. During the inspection, the staff successfully promoted the children's interest and excitement in nature and their use of mathematical language through the close observation of worms discovered in the outdoor play area.
- The children's paintings and art work are displayed attractively around the playroom and labelled with the children's own language. The range of creative opportunities for the children is currently limited.
- There are good opportunities and resources provided for the children to develop their manipulative skills. The staff need to provide better organisation and structure in the outdoor area in order to ensure that the children have appropriate opportunities for physical development outdoors.
- The children participate well in songs and rhymes which reinforce counting and they are familiar with basic shapes; however, there were missed opportunities for staff to develop further the children's knowledge and use of early mathematical language.

9. The centre has developed good links with the parents and provides two detailed written reports and two parent meetings each year to inform parents of their child's progress. The centre uses a text service and a monthly newsletter to inform parents about events in the playgroup. The current newsletter does not provide sufficient detailed information about how parents can support their children's learning at home. Good use is made of visitors to the centre and educational trips to enhance the children's educational experiences. The centre has very good links with the primary school.

10. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is good. This is evidenced through the happy children, the welcoming ethos and the very good working relationships at all levels. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to both the care and the well-being of the children.

11. The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following area needs to be addressed:

- the staff need to review and update the Code of Conduct for staff including the arrangements for the personal care of the children.

12. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, through the provision of a healthy snack and encouraging the children to eat a healthy lunch.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

13. The pre-school leader is enthusiastic, motivated and provides good leadership for the staff. She is committed to the continuing professional development of all her team and promotes a strong sense of teamwork.

14. The staff have made a useful start to self-evaluation through the development of action plans which target appropriate areas for improvement. They are committed to improving further the provision in the centre and consult with the parents through questionnaires and a comment book. The early year's specialist (EYS) employed by the Early Years Organisation has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in a short period of time. The support provided is well-focused and matches effectively the needs of the centre. The staff now need, with the support of the management group and the EYS, to introduce a more systematic approach to continuous improvement within the provision through a development plan.

15. The key strengths of the centre include:

- the well-behaved children who settle quickly to their chosen learning activities;
- the welcoming, caring ethos and the very good working relationships at all levels;
- the satisfactory and good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the system in place to monitor and record the children's progress and development and identify early any additional learning needs; and
- the effective leadership and the team spirit among the hard-working and dedicated staff.

16. The areas for improvement include the need:

- to improve the provision for outdoor play;
- to develop further the planning for and promotion of the children's language and learning; and
- for the staff, with the support of the management group and EYS, to develop a more systematic approach to continuous improvement within the provision.

17. In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Almost all of the parents responded to the questionnaire and a small number made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the very caring staff and the happy, welcoming atmosphere. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive. Key messages from the responses, and the very few concerns raised, have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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