

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dominican @ Orana Pre-School
Playgroup, Newry

Report of an Inspection
in September 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Dominican @ Orana Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	c/o Orana Children and Family Centre 2 Warrenpoint Road NEWRY Co Down BT34 2PF
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	29 September 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	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
• 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	2	-
• with English as an additional language	2	-
• 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	91%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	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
3 ¹ / ₆ hours	N/A	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	58.3%
Number of written comments:	5

DOMINICAN @ ORANA PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT34 2PF (5AB-0498)

1. Dominican @ Orana Pre-School Playgroup is situated in the Orana Children and Family Centre in Newry. Since the last inspection the Orana Playgroup has moved to new purpose built premises.

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. There is a very settled, caring atmosphere in the centre. The children respond positively to the staff's high expectations and display exemplary behaviour; they are eager to explore new learning and make full use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. They are learning to share, take turns, and to persevere with tasks. The children clearly enjoy the excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum and they all engage in concentrated and productive play. The staff ensure the children's art work is celebrated through attractive displays around the playrooms.

4. The staff have worked hard to create a language rich environment which promotes effectively the children's language development. Themed books enhance areas of play and the children frequently browse through these. In addition to the large group story session, there are regular opportunities for informal story, rhyme and music sessions with individuals and small groups. The majority of the children can talk about their experiences and express their thoughts and ideas confidently.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently outstanding; every opportunity is used to promote language and learning. The staff often engage the children in purposeful discussions and develop their language through skilful questioning. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable provides lengthy periods of free play and the necessary routines such as snack and tidy up time are well established and, as a result, the children display high levels of independence.

6. The staff have developed an appropriate method of planning which outlines variety, challenge and progression in the programme. Their reflective evaluations are based on the children's responses and are used effectively to inform future learning and to develop helpful guidance for planning cross-curricular activities. The staff know the children very well and work very effectively as a team to ensure that the individual needs of all the children are met.

7. The parents are encouraged to become involved in the education of their child and the life of the playgroup through a variety of ways, for example, meetings, newsletters, a parents' booklet and volunteering to help on outings. Very good links have been established with the local community including the primary schools to which the children will transfer.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to guide the staff in this aspect of their work.

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

10. The playgroup gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The staff have been developing the outdoor play area and the children clearly enjoy the wide range of activities and experiences on offer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The enthusiastic leader is an excellent role model for the staff with whom she works closely. They have developed a shared understanding of the aims of the playgroup. Their hard work and commitment to the well-being and development of the children contributes to the overall effectiveness of the playgroup.

12. The leader is also the playgroup's early year's specialist (EYS). She provides excellent advice and support to the staff. The process of self-evaluation is well embedded and there is evidence that it has led to improvements in the quality of the provision. Appropriate short, medium and long-term priorities are clearly stated in the playgroup's development plan.

13. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the caring ethos and the exemplary behaviour of the children who display a very positive attitude to their learning;
- the breadth, balance, challenge and progression provided in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the outstanding quality of the interaction between the staff and the children;
- the well developed provision for outdoor play;
- the appropriate methods of planning and assessment; and
- the outstanding quality of the leadership and the commitment of all the staff to delivering high quality pre-school 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 management group and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fourteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and a small number made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and the representatives of the management committee.

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