

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Early Days Playgroup,  
Bangor

Report of an Inspection  
in February 2013

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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

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Early Days Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	c/o Youth and Community Wing Ballymagee Primary School 77 Ashbury Avenue BANGOR Co Down BT19 6ZG
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	4 February 2013
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	26 May 2005

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	24	-
in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	8	-
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	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	90%	-

\* 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	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	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	-	185

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	25
Percentage returned	44%
Number of written comments:	2

## 1. Introduction

Early Days Playgroup is situated in a playroom in the Youth Wing of Ballymagee Primary School, Bangor. Most of the children who attend the playgroup come from the surrounding area. Since the last inspection in May 2005, two new members of staff have been appointed.

## 2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from the scrutiny of a relevant range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty-five questionnaires were issued to the parents and eleven were returned, two with written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated a very good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, the parents appreciated the caring staff and they valued the extensive range of play activities provided for the children. All members of staff and two members of the management group responded to the questionnaire; all were very positive and emphasised the dedication of the staff and the effective leadership of the playgroup by the leader. The Inspectorate has reported the main issues emerging from the questionnaires to the leader and the member 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 Early Days 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	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

## 4. Children's achievements

**The quality of the children's achievements is good.**

- The children's conversational skills are developing well and they engage in purposeful and sustained play. They develop an interest in early reading through the effective story-telling session, their exploration of books, in particular, information books, and through the stories read by staff at the children's request. The children develop their experimental writing skills through the availability of a very good range of writing tools and materials, both indoors and outdoors.

- The children demonstrate a good understanding of early mathematical concepts by developing their understanding of size, shape, weight, capacity and positional language through a wide range of play activities. They are developing a good understanding of the properties of materials through well-planned play with sand, water and scrap materials.

## **5. Provision for learning**

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

- The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is very good. There are positive working relationships at all levels. The staff work sensitively with specific children who require support with their learning and personal and social development. The children are well-behaved; they access the learning resources independently, demonstrating a very good sense of responsibility for the learning environment.
- The staff's interactions with the children are consistently of a very good quality. The wide range of activities provided offers the children high quality opportunities for learning in all aspects of the curriculum. The organisation of the session is well planned and provides a balance of extended periods of freely chosen play and group activities, which are led well by the staff. The learning environment is vibrant and well organised, with colourful displays that celebrate the children's work.
- The members of staff are developing the weekly planning format to take increasing account of the children's responses to the activities. They need to develop further the system of observations and assessment and to link them specifically to the planning to meet the individual needs and interests of the children.
- The individual plans for children with specific learning needs identify appropriate long-term targets for development and the staff provide good support. There is a need, however, for the staff to set short-term learning and behaviour targets for specific children and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies that they use with the children on a regular basis.
- The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the healthy snack routines and the very good opportunities for outdoor physical play, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **6. Leadership and management**

**The quality of leadership and management is good.**

- The leader manages the playgroup to a high standard. The members of staff demonstrate effective teamwork; they are well organised and reflective pre-school practitioners.

- The staff of the playgroup receive a very good quality of professional advice from the independent early years specialist (IEYS). While the development plan and associated action plans identify appropriate areas for improvement, for example, the planning; there is a need to develop further the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress of their actions.
- The parents are kept well-informed about the children's learning and events within the playgroup through the regular newsletter. They receive appropriate information about their child's progress through formal meetings and their child's transition report. The staff report that a valuable programme of liaison has been established with the local primary school.
- 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. There is a need for the members of the management committee to access the safeguarding training at the next available course.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the Early Days 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 and assessment and to link them specifically to the planning 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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