

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Earlybird Pre-School, Armagh

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2011

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Earlybird Pre-School
<b>Address:</b>	Jenny's Row ARMAGH BT61 9AP
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	26 October 2011
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	1 May 2004

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	19	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
• 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	*	-
• with English as an additional language	*	-
• 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	82%	-

\* Figures above five or fewer

\*\* 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	1	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	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>
3 hours	-	189

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned:	*
Number of written comments:	*

## **EARLYBIRD PRE-SCHOOL, ARMAGH, BT61 9AP (5AB-0213)**

1. Earlybird Pre-School is located in a daycare centre in Armagh city and provides daily pre-school sessions for the children in the surrounding local area. The pre-school accommodation is laid out in a series of playrooms and a small outdoor area. The children's physical play experiences are extended through the use of an indoor soft play area. The leader and most of the staff have been in post since the last inspection.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the pre-school centre is good. The pre-school centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the pre-school centre has demonstrated the capacity to address; the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the pre-school centre's progress on these areas.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The staff prepares carefully the areas of play in each of the playrooms, providing a wide range of stimulating activities for the children's play. The children and their parents are welcomed warmly on arrival and the children settle quickly to play. The staff places a high priority on the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development. The children are confident in making choices, are beginning to form friendships and are developing appropriate levels of independence for the time of year. The children are able to pour their own drinks at snack time and are encouraged to be independent; their behaviour is exemplary.

4. The children's language development is promoted effectively through listening to stories, reciting nursery rhymes and engaging in conversations during play. The newcomer children are developing comprehension and naming skills. Most of the children have developed good fine motor skills and can draw, paint and engage in appropriate mark-making for their ages and stages of development. The staff display and celebrate the children's art work throughout the playrooms; these displays along with themed books and interest areas help to stimulate the children's problem-solving skills and imaginative play.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. There are many instances of very good quality interaction between the staff and the children; the staff uses every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. The learning arises naturally from the play and the children's ideas and, as a result, the children are developing good mathematical understanding and a good range of vocabulary. The children benefit from lengthy periods of play and are secure in and learn from their routines.

6. The staff works hard to plan for and successfully provide a broad and balanced pre-school programme. The use of themes provides variety across the year and the staff appropriately takes account of the progression in the activities and the resources throughout the year. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded. The link between the assessment and the planning methods is underdeveloped to sustain challenge for the children.

7. The staff are aware of the children's range of language needs, including those with English as an additional language, and take account of their specific needs. The staff has established effective links with a range of interagency support services. There are good processes in place to identify and plan for the children with additional needs.

8. A variety of effective methods, such as regular newsletters and a parents' notice board, has been designed to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the pre-school centre and to highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. In addition, there are regular meetings to inform the parents about their children's progress and development.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere based on very good working relationships in the playrooms.

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

11. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The parents support effectively the healthy eating policy and provide healthy snacks for the children's breaks. When the weather permits, the children are able to use the outdoor area and the space for physical activity is extended into a soft play area.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

12. The leader of the pre-school centre is well-organised and caring, and is a very good role model for the other staff. The deputy leader is dedicated and all the staff work effectively as a team in the best interests of the children. The management group are supportive and encourage a culture of self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement. Effective use is made of the resources to provide good quality pre-school provision.

13. A three-year development plan ensures that additional priorities and targets for future development are identified. The staff report that they have very good working relationships with their early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation who has provided very good consistent support and identified appropriate areas for development.

### **14. The key strengths of this pre-school centre include:**

- the stimulating and attractive learning environment and the very good opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the programme for the children's personal, social and emotional development exemplified by the children's very good levels of confidence in making choices and turn-taking during play;
- the many instances of very good quality interaction between the staff and the children that sustained the children's involvement;
- the effective planning to develop a broad and progressive pre-school programme and the insightful assessments of the children's progress in learning;
- the well-organised, caring and effective leader who is well-supported by the hard-working staff; and
- the outstanding pastoral care and inclusive ethos.

**15. The areas for improvement include the need:**

- to develop further the links between the planning and assessment methods in order to sustain challenge in the children's learning.

16. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the pre-school centre is good. The pre-school centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the pre-school centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the pre-school centre's progress on these areas.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management committee to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. The responses were almost all positive about the quality of the pre-school provision.

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