

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Glenarm Community  
Pre-School, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2012



## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Glenarm Community Pre-School
Address:	Glenarm Orange Hall 11 Mark Street Glenarm BALLYMENA Co Antrim BT44 0AU
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	31 May 2012
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 2005

### 1. Details of Children

	am session	pm session
<b>Total number of children:</b>		
attending the pre-school centre	16	
in their immediate pre-school year	10	
funded by Department of Education	10	
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	81%	

\* Special Educational Needs

\*\* 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
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications		2
New appointments within previous 12 months		1

<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	-	182

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	10
Percentage returned:	100%
Number of written comments:	5

**GLENARM COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT44 0AU  
(3BB-0133)**

1. Glenarm Pre-School Centre operates within the Orange Hall in Glenarm village. The children come from the surrounding area.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is very good. The centre is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children appear happy and are well settled. Most can co-operate with one another and can participate confidently in the daily routines. During the inspection, there were examples of concentrated play by individuals and small groups of children at the painting area, in the story corner and at the small world play. While they are eager to explore and make full use of the attractively presented learning environment, the children appeared to move frequently to activities where other children or a member of the staff were present. This could be as a result of the challenges faced by the relatively small number of pre-school aged children and the wide range of activities on offer within a large space.

4. The majority of the children are articulate and enthusiastic to engage with the staff and each other. A small number of the children require focused support to encourage their communication and language development and receive effective support from the staff. During the inspection, many of the children browsed in the book area and enjoyed talking about the stories; most listened attentively during the small group, the large story session and joined in with the varied repertoire of rhymes and songs. They can identify their own symbol and a majority of the children can draw figurative representations. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to experiment with mark making and early writing. The staff should encourage the children to use these skills further in labelling their own artwork and creative models.

**THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The staff have worked hard to enhance the quality of the learning environment both indoors and outdoors. They make very good use of relevant posters, photographs, children's work and topical displays to present a large, attractive and stimulating playroom. There are distinct areas of play indoors and the children have daily access to a small enclosed space for physical play outdoors. The children would benefit from a review of the space used for physical activities indoors; limiting the overall size of the play areas should promote more sustained and concentrated play. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable ensures a good balance between free play and activities organised by the staff. The adult interactions with the children are consistently of a high quality, the staff ask open ended questions, extend the children's language and learning and introduce new vocabulary. The staff show enjoyment as they work with the children.

6. The pre-school programme provides an interesting and varied programme for the children based on appropriate themes and topics. The programme is regularly evaluated and the staff amend the planning accordingly to take account of the children's needs and interests. The staff demonstrate increasing confidence in making relevant observations and assessments of the children's progress and link this information appropriately to the planning. Children who require additional support have been identified and the staff have established good links with relevant agencies and professionals.

7. There are very good links with the parents who are very supportive of the staff. They are kept well-informed about the children's progress and the work of the centre through a range of relevant meetings and monthly newsletters. These links should be extended by the staff to encourage the parents to become more involved in their child's learning and development. Very good use is made of visitors from the wider community to enhance the children's learning experiences. The centre has good links with the schools to which the children transfer and is an important part of the local community.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. The staff provide a safe, secure, and happy environment for the children based on caring and supportive relationships.

9. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

10. The centre gives good attention to promoting a healthy eating and physical activities, for example, the opportunity for the children to receive a healthy snack, and the regular opportunities for physical activities.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader is effective in her role; she is well organised and committed to providing good quality provision, the well being of the children and the continued development of the centre. The staff are hard working and work well as a team each fulfilling their designated roles conscientiously to ensure the smooth and effective day-to-day provision for the children.

12. The staff report that they have employed an independent early years specialist (EYS) since September 2011 as there had been a number of changes in the EYSs employed by the Early Years Organisation (EYO) over a period of two years which resulted in fragmented support for the staff. The independent EYS has provided regular, well-focused support for the staff in developing their planning, the outdoor learning environment and developing their procedures for self-evaluation to promote improvements in the quality of provision within the centre. It will be important for these procedures to be developed further and for the development plan and associated action plans to detail more specifically the actions planned for future development.

#### **13. The key strengths of the centre include:**

- the warm, welcoming ethos and the sense of fun and enjoyment;
- the quality of the staff interactions with the children which promote effectively the children's care, learning and development;
- the rich and varied programme and the good opportunities for learning in all areas of the programme;
- the very good provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning;

- the effective methods of planning and assessment; and
- the very good leadership provided by the leader and the support provided by the enthusiastic team.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is very good. The centre is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and 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 and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Ten of the parents (100%) responded to the questionnaire and five 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 centre's provision; in particular the parents praised the caring, helpful staff and the regular information which they receive about the centre and the planned events. 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 management of the centre.

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