

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Glengormley Integrated Primary
School Playgroup,
Newtownabbey

Report of an Inspection
in November 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Glengormley Integrated Primary School Playgroup
Address:	Glengormley Integrated Primary School 166 Church Road Glengormley NEWTOWNABBEY Co Antrim BT36 6HJ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	18 November 2010
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 2003

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	25	25
• in their immediate pre-school year	25	20
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	25	20
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	0
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	0
• with English as an additional language	2	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	86%	N/A

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	1

Number of: **	
Students	2
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
3¼ hours	2½ hours	187

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	49
Percentage returned:	39%
Number of written comments:	11

GLENGORMLEY INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 6HJ (3BB-0094)

1. Glengormley Integrated Primary School Playgroup operates within Glengormley Integrated Primary School. An afternoon session was introduced in September 2010 and the Deputy Leader of the morning session acts as Leader in the afternoon session.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are well settled and the majority of them enjoy making independent choices and are familiar with the daily routines. Approximately a quarter of the children have limited attention spans, are dependent on the adults for support in relation to aspects of their social skills, resolving conflicts, taking turns and playing appropriately with the materials. Small groups of more mature children were observed playing collaboratively in the dough play creating a variety of cakes and buns, accompanying their singing of rhymes and jingles with a variety of musical instruments and purposefully engaged in the creative areas. The different types of play observed by the children reflect the wide range in the stages of development represented by the children within the two sessions. The staff need to ensure that they are more consistent in managing these issues in order to promote more purposeful and sustained play for all of the children.

4. The staff engage in beneficial discussion and develop oral language appropriately throughout the sessions. Generally, the children are able to engage in conversations and talk about their play. A significant minority of children still require adult support and attention encouraging clearer and longer phrases and sentences. The staff encourage the children to talk to one another, develop their listening skills, read stories on request and promote their enjoyment in books. A majority of the children listened attentively and were enthusiastic to talk about aspects of the story during group story and in particular, respond with great excitement to the owl puppets. A minority of the children were easily distracted and became restless and detached. The staff need to review the organisation of story time and transition times in order to meet all of the children's needs more effectively.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff, give much thought to creating a welcoming and inviting learning environment for the children. A review of the use of space of the playroom has resulted in the children now benefiting from distinct areas of play. The staff report that they receive good support from the primary school and are timetabled to use the large hall for physical play. Greater attention is now given to promoting displays of the children's work in the corridor area outside the playroom and creating some inviting interest areas which highlight the monthly topic, the children's experiences and interests. The staff need to monitor the range of resources being introduced at this time of the year carefully and encourage the children to use and respect the equipment and resources appropriately at all times.

6. The staff have made good progress in planning and evaluating a broad and balanced pre-school programme. They make some observations of the children's responses to the planned activities. The staff are aware that many of the children require further support to develop their communication, language and social skills. Children who require additional support have been identified and appropriate individual educational plans have been drawn up and are used to guide the work of the staff; good links with relevant agencies and professionals have been established. The staff now need to link the observations of the children's responses to their play more clearly into the future plans, identify clear strategies for individual children and ensure there is sufficient challenge and progression for all of the children.

7. The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is good. Among the strengths are the very positive working relationships at all levels, the staff's commitment to the care and well-being of the children and the friendly and welcoming atmosphere that permeates the playgroup.

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

9. The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the opportunity for the children to receive a healthy snack, and the regular opportunities for energetic play.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10. The staff are an established hard-working team and are committed to continuous improvement. They are in the process of drawing up a new development plan which currently identifies some appropriate priorities for improvement including provision for children with special educational needs. The playgroup has recently begun to receive support from a new early years specialist (EYS) employed by the Early Years Organisation. The staff, management and the EYS now need to refine the action plans to include updated training in child protection, behaviour management and give a higher priority to improving the transitions between routines and activities.

11. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the contented and settled children who enjoy their experiences at playgroup;
- the caring ethos of the playgroup and the quality of relationships at all levels;
- the good methods developed to communicate with the parents;
- the well established links with the primary school and other agencies within the community; and
- the hard-working and committed staff and their openness to continue to improve their provision.

12. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the organisation of the transitional times between routines and activities in order to maximise the children's learning opportunities and experiences fully; and

- develop more appropriate strategies for monitoring and responding effectively to those children who require additional support with aspects of their development.

13. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, 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 playgroup'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. Nineteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and eleven made additional written comments.
- The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with many aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the caring and approachable staff, the additional session on offer and how quickly the children have settled. The few concerns raised were shared with the leaders and the management group.
- 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 management of the pre-school centre.

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