

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gleno Pre-School Playgroup,
Larne

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012



STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of playgroup centre:	Gleno Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	15 Gleno Village Gleno LARNE Co Antrim BT40 3LG
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 March 2012
Date of previous inspection:	27 March 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the playgroup centre	21	-
in their immediate playgroup year	18	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
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	0	-
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	89%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
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 hours	-	186

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned	56%
Number of written comments:	5

GLENO PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, LARNE, CO ANTRIM, BT40 3LG (3AB-0241)

1. Gleno Pre-school Playgroup operates within the Young Farmer's Hall in Gleno village; the hall is shared with a number of other organisations.
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 are well settled and display very good behaviour and a positive attitude to learning. The majority of the children have very good levels of concentration and engage in purposeful and productive play. They make independent choices, display a keen interest in the activities and listen attentively during group story sessions. Most of the children are gaining a good understanding of the early mathematical concepts and developing their skill of reasoning and logic through the constructional and scientific play activities. The majority of the children access the resources, tools and materials independently to create their three-dimensional constructional models and two-dimensional art work. Despite not having an outdoor play area, the staff have worked hard to provide a range of indoor activities related to the world around us (WAU) of the curriculum. During the inspection, the children demonstrated great interest in the natural world, in particular, the baby chicks growing in the incubator within the playroom, caring for their stick insects and growing a variety of spring bulbs.

4. The majority of the children are articulate, engage readily with the staff, visitors and their peers and join in group discussions with great enthusiasm. During the inspection, many of the children browsed in the inviting book area and enjoyed talking about the illustrations in their chosen books. The staff introduce the children to text through the writing of captions around many areas of the playroom and on the children's drawings and paintings to reflect the children's comments about their work. Many of the children show an interest in early writing and, during the inspection, approximately a quarter of the children were observed making good use of the mark making and writing opportunities, for example the construction, art and writing areas.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff give much thought and attention to creating an inviting and stimulating learning environment for the children each day. The children's work and photographs are displayed around the playroom. There are distinct areas of play and good use is made of the available space in the playroom. The daily timetable is organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. The snack-time is organised informally and provides good opportunities for the children to develop their independence and social skills.

6. The pre-school programme offers good to very good opportunities for learning across the curriculum. The staff join the children in their play and talk to them about their ideas, personal experiences and achievements. During the inspection, there were very good examples of skilful interaction which extended the children's language and thinking skills and also promoted the development of mathematical language, creativity, investigative and problem-solving skills.

7. The staff have worked hard to develop an effective system of planning the programme and assessing the children's responses to the play activities and their individual progress. The planning is detailed and flexible, allowing the staff to take account of the children's interests as they arise. The children's learning and progress is carefully assessed and recorded using perceptive observations; this is used to inform future planning and is shared regularly with the parents. The staff have recently introduced individual books for each child to collate photographs and examples of their work to celebrate their achievements throughout the year; these are already demonstrating evidence of the children's progress.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the centre is outstanding. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming and the pervading ethos is one of caring support and respect for the children and their families. Among the strengths are the very positive working relationships at all levels, and the priority given to the children's well-being; the children are caring, sociable, and confident and their behaviour is exemplary.

9. 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 very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, the children have access to healthy snacks and daily opportunities for physical activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader provides very good leadership and manages the centre very effectively. She has inspired a strong sense of team spirit among the staff and they share her commitment to continuous improvement.

12. The process of self-evaluation is well embedded and there is clear evidence that this has led to continuous improvement in the quality of the provision over recent years. A detailed and relevant three year development plan which includes action plans ensures priorities and targets for future development are identified, discussed with the parents and eventually evaluated. The staff report that they now receive a regular programme of support from their newly appointed EYS. There has been a change of early years specialist (EYS) deployed from the Early Years Organisation over the last year. The support from the EYS is well focused, constructive and has enabled and supported the staff to implement important strategies and systems to improve the quality of the provision.

13. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the good standards achieved, and the good progress being made, by the children in relation to their age and stage of development;
- the very good quality of the interaction between the adults and the children;
- the breadth, balance and developing opportunities for progression in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the effective methods of planning and assessment;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care provision; and
- the very good leadership and effective team approach.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this 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 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 many aspects of the centre's work; in particular, the parents praised the committed and dedicated staff, the happy and settled children who are making progress with aspects of their development. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive. Key messages from the responses and the very few concerns raised have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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