

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Kenbaan Community  
Pre-School, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection  
In May 2011

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Kenbaan Community Pre-school
Address:	St Brigid's Primary School Broughshane Road BALLYMENA Co Antrim BT43 7DX
Management Type:	voluntary

Date of inspection:	26 May 2011
Date of previous inspection:	3 November 2004

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school centre	26	-
in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
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	0	-
with English as an additional language	1	-
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	92%	-

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	4
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
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
3½ hours	-	189

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned	34.6%
Number of written comments:	3

## **KENBAAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT43 7DX (3BB-0090)**

1. Kenbaan Community Pre-school is accommodated in a mobile unit which is situated in the grounds of St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymena. The children attend from the wider Ballymena area and all are in their immediate pre-school year. At the time of the inspection the playgroup had recently relocated and had been in these premises for only two weeks. The playgroup uses the St Brigid's Primary School hall for physical play sessions and will have access to the school grounds and a planned outdoor area. The playgroup staff are also developing their own secure outdoor area.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all of 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 all appear happy, well settled and interested in their learning. Most can concentrate and persevere at tasks for sustained periods of time and their behaviour is excellent. They demonstrate good levels of independence during daily routines, managing their own personal care and as they select and use equipment. At times, the high ratio of adults to children on the morning of the inspection impeded the children's own collaborative play with one another.

4. Almost all the children show confidence in talking to adults and their peers. They listen very attentively during group sessions and show an interest in stories, rhymes and mark making. They engage enthusiastically with the opportunities provided for singing.

5. The children enjoy using a range of materials to make simple constructions and show good levels of interest and curiosity in exploring natural items and living things. The children use a range of small tools with confidence. A few children show a clear awareness of number and measures. The staff should ensure a broader range of mathematical language and concepts are introduced naturally through the play and other routines. The children use the range of art materials confidently to draw and make patterns. A majority make simple representations of people and familiar objects. On the day of the inspection there were limited opportunities for imaginative play. The playgroup needs to provide more challenging and better resourced daily opportunities for imaginative play which meets the needs and interests of all of the children.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

6. The staff have worked very hard, in a very short period of time, to relocate and set up an attractive and stimulating learning environment in their new playroom. The staff all have a caring and supportive approach with the children and settle them effectively to purposeful play. They manage the group sessions very effectively, read stories to small groups of children and, at times, exploit fully the learning opportunities inherent in the play. The staff need to listen more closely to the children's ideas and build on them to avoid those occasions when there is too much adult direction and intervention. The staff need to ensure a more consistently high quality of interaction with the children among all of the staff.

7. The staff work hard to plan a wide range of interesting experiences for the children which cover all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They need to continue to develop the longer term planning to ensure progression in all areas of play including their new outdoor area. In addition, the shorter term planning needs to be evaluated more rigorously and the information used to guide the planning process to meet the needs and interests of the children. The assessment processes are currently underdeveloped. The lack of continuous early years specialist (EYS) support along with the focus on moving premises has impeded the development of this aspect of the work which now needs to be urgently addressed.

8. The staff have good relationships with the parents and very good pastoral links with the adjoining primary school. More should be done to foster the interest and involvement of parents in their children's learning and development. There are useful links with the local SureStart who offer complimentary help to a number of children with additional needs.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this playgroup is very good. The strengths include the caring and supportive ethos and the children's excellent behaviour.

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

11. The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the provision of the healthy breaks and the enjoyable and energetic music and movement sessions in the large hall. The development of the outdoor space will enhance this provision further.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The long serving and committed leader and staff team demonstrate an open and reflective approach to their work. They have attended relevant training for speech and language and special needs in recent years and have a development plan which identifies some relevant areas for further improvement. The EYS support provided though the Early Years Organisation has been inadequate in recent years due to a high turn over of staff. The playgroup is now better placed, following the appointment of a new EYS, the support of the local primary school principal and the well motivated playgroup team, to draw up a more detailed development plan to address the issues highlighted during this inspection.

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

- the positive ethos based on the very good relationships between the staff and the children;
- the well organised daily timetable which provides a good balance between self-initiated play and well organised whole group sessions;
- the supportive and hard-working staff who often help to extend the children's vocabulary, foster their interest in books and stories and promote purposeful play;
- the broad range of activities which provide satisfactory to good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;

- the children's good levels of confidence and independence and their interest in the natural environment; and
- the strong team approach demonstrated by the hard-working and committed leader and staff.

**14. The areas for improvement include the need to:**

- develop the assessment methods to provide a more comprehensive record of the children's progress and make more effective use of these to meet the children's individual needs;
- develop the written planning to ensure progression in all areas of learning and consistency in the staff interaction to promote the development of children's language and thinking; and
- improve the continuity and quality of support from the EYS.

15. 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 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, the staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Nine of the parents responded to the questionnaire and three made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the work of the staff and the good progress being made by their children. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires indicated a strong sense of team approach. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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