

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Kirkinriola Early Years,  
Ballymena

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2011

### **STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Kirkinriola Early Years
<b>Address:</b>	5 Clougher Road BALLYMENA Co Antrim BT43 6TB
<b>Management Type:</b>	Committee

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	19 October 2011
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	11 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	20	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	19	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	19	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
• 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	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	92%	-

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	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
3¼ hours	-	173

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	20
Percentage returned:	70%
Number of written comments:	8

## **KIRKINRIOLA EARLY YEARS, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT43 6TB (3BB-0136)**

1. Kirkinriola Early Years is situated in mobile accommodation in the grounds of Kirkinriola Primary School, just outside the town of Ballymena. Two of the three staff members were employed in the centre at the time of the last inspection in 2004. Nineteen of the 23 children currently enrolled are in their pre-school year; nine of these children attended the centre last year.

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

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children demonstrate very good progress in their overall development in relation to their age and stage of development. They respond very well to the staff's high expectations, and their behaviour is outstanding. The children appear relaxed and happy in the centre, they are familiar with the daily routines and they settle quickly and confidently to the activities. Most of the children display keen interest in their chosen activities, and engage well in collaborative and imaginative play. They share, take turns and show care and respect for one another and their environment.

4. The development of the children's communication and language skills are key priorities for the staff. The planned programme provides excellent opportunities to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary and the majority of the children demonstrate very good progress in their listening and conversational skills and in their developing vocabulary. Books are given a high priority by the staff, and during the inspection, many of the children showed a keen interest in the books which were incorporated in each of the play areas. Many of the children also showed an interest in early writing and were observed making good use of the range of writing resources available in the areas of play.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The staff prepare a rich and purposeful learning environment which provides excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children's work is celebrated and displayed attractively in the playroom. The staff have recently worked hard to develop a stimulating outdoor area which provides very good opportunities and a wide range of resources for interesting play activities. The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is excellent. The staff engage purposefully with the children and build on the children's ideas. During the inspection, there were many good examples of skilful interactions by the staff which extended the children's language, learning, self-esteem and thinking skills, and also promoted the development of rich mathematical language, investigation and problem solving.

6. The staff have developed an effective topic-based approach to planning a broad and balanced programme for the children. They make regular detailed observations of the children's responses to the programme, which help to inform both their recording of the children's progress and their future planning. The staff identify early those children with additional needs, they involve appropriately the parents and outside agencies and provide effective support for these children.

7. The staff work hard to keep the parents informed of and involved in the life and work of the centre. The parents receive a monthly newsletter informing them of forthcoming events as well as how they can support their child's learning. Relationships between the staff and the parents are excellent, and the parents are willing volunteers for a variety of events in the centre, including fundraising. The staff have developed very good pastoral links with most of the local primary schools to which the children transfer.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. Among the strengths are the evident excellent relationships among the staff and between the children and the staff. The children are respectful and co-operative and the staff are clearly committed to their well-being.

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

10. The centre gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have access to healthy daily snacks and there are daily opportunities to play outdoors; these encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

11. The leader has been in post for ten years and provides good leadership. She is highly enthusiastic and motivated and manages the day to day running of the centre very effectively. She is dedicated and committed to ensuring high quality provision in the centre, for example, through working with the staff to establish a stimulating learning environment each day for the children. She has encouraged the development of a strong sense of team work among all the staff. There are appropriate opportunities for the continuous development of staff and students, for example, through a comprehensive induction programme.

12. Self-evaluation is not developed sufficiently; the current development plan lacks focus. The staff need to devise a comprehensive development plan, with relevant priorities for improvement, incorporating appropriate targets and actions to guide more effectively the further improvement in the children's learning experiences.

13. The leader of the centre is also the early years specialist (EYS). She provides very good advice, support and guidance for the staff on the learning inherent in the play activities.

14. The key strengths of this centre include:

- the happy, well-settled children, the majority of whom are exhibiting developing independence and very good behaviour;
- the hard-working and committed staff who work very well as a team, focused on offering high quality provision for the children;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care, evident through the very positive relationships at all levels;

- the high quality of the interactions between the staff and the children, which promote effectively the development of the children's language and thinking skills; and
- the appropriate links with others, including the parents, local primary schools and outside agencies.

15. The area for improvement is the need:

- for the staff, the EYS and the management committee to devise a clear development plan with corresponding action plans to promote effective self-evaluation.

## **CONCLUSION**

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

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management group to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Fourteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and eight made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the level of care and dedication of the staff and how their children enjoyed the centre and the progress they had made. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were also highly positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the Centre.

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