

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Flower Playgroup,
Sion Mills

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Flower Playgroup
Address:	28 Peacock Road Glebe SION MILLS Co Tyrone BT82 9NW
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	4 May 2011
Date of previous inspection:	19 January 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school centre	17	-
in their immediate pre-school year	17	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	17	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	6	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
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	86%	-

* 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
2½ hours	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned	76.5%
Number of written comments:	5

LITTLE FLOWER PLAYGROUP, SION MILLS, CO TYRONE, BT82 9NW (2AB-0055)

1. Little Flower Playgroup operates in the former St Theresa's National School and is situated on the Peacock Road, Glebe, near Sion Mills. Since the last inspection in 2004, a new deputy leader has been appointed. The playgroup operates one part-time session for pre-school age children who come from the surrounding local area and within a three mile radius.
2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children demonstrate very good progress in their overall development in relation to their age and the time of the year. They appear relaxed and happy and settle quickly and enthusiastically to their chosen activities. The children's behaviour is excellent; they relate positively to each other and co-operate well in sharing their resources and toys. The children demonstrate high levels of independence and concentration across all of their learning activities and are keen to talk about, and to show, what they are doing and what they have made.
4. The staff encourage the children to develop an interest in print and books and the children demonstrate close attention and very good listening skills during story sessions. A wide range of stimulating print based resources, including clear labels and captions presented in context, is provided to support and extend the children's learning across all curriculum areas, most notably to secure their curiosity within their World Around Us topics. Many of the children show an interest in mark making, and some are beginning to annotate their drawings with individual letters and simple representations of words to communicate meaning. The children engage very well in imaginative play and are confident in selecting and using a range of tools and equipment. They express their creative ideas well using a range of materials; their art work and models are displayed attractively around the playgroup. The children show very good progress in all aspects of their developing language. The staff use appropriate mathematical language consistently when participating in the children's free play and organised activities; as a result, many of the children show an interest and early proficiency in counting, sorting and making comparisons using the appropriate mathematical language. The children participate enthusiastically in singing action songs and rhymes; they explore and investigate a wide range of natural materials and demonstrate a keen interest in their environment.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There is a very welcoming and purposeful atmosphere in the centre and relationships between the staff and the children are excellent. The staff work very hard and operate skilfully as a team in order to secure the best outcomes for all of the children. They create a carefully planned and stimulating learning environment, and through the consistently high quality of their interactions with the children, promote and develop effectively the children's self-esteem, language, thinking skills and independence. The children understand and respond very positively to their well established routines and transitions throughout the day. These routines such as snack and physical play promote the children's decision-making and self-management skills.

6. The written planning outlines an appropriately broad, balanced and connected curriculum for the children. The staff know the children very well and they carefully record and assess the children's learning and progress, using a combination of photographs and thoughtful observations; this ongoing assessment is used to inform future planning, meet the individual needs of the children and is shared with the parents.

7. The communication with the parents is excellent. The playgroup provides the parents with comprehensive information about the curriculum through, for example, the very detailed monthly newsletter and the informative playgroup website. In addition to the informal meetings which occur at the beginning and end of the day, the parents receive information regularly about their child's progress during the year. The centre also maintains very good links with the local primary school which supports and strengthens the arrangements for smooth transitions for the children.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The strengths include the high priority given to the care, development and emotional well-being of the children, the parents and the staff and the very effective ways of communicating with the parents.

9. The playgroup has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued from the Department of Education (DE).

10. The playgroup gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating, developing early understanding about healthy lifestyles and physical activity, including, for example, through the provision of fruit breaks which the children help to provide and prepare, the playgroup's 'Sow and Grow' project and the regular opportunities for the development of the children's physical skills outdoors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The dedicated and hard-working leader provides excellent leadership and management of the playgroup. She is enthusiastic and innovative in her approaches and has worked steadily to develop her vision for the playgroup in collaboration with others. The staff and members of the management committee work together as a strong team and share their skills; they are all fully committed to the best possible outcomes for all of the children and their families.

12. There is a strongly embedded culture of reflection and self-evaluation in all aspects of the playgroup and clear evidence of continuous improvement both indoors and outdoors. The development plan (DP), which is reviewed regularly, identifies appropriate priorities and actions for future development. The staff receive support from an early years specialist (EYS) employed by the Early Years Organisation; they report good working relationships with and helpful support from the EYS.

13. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the quality of the broad and balanced programme for learning and the wide range of stimulating experiences provided for the children;
- the very high quality of adult interaction in promoting the children's learning, development and progress;

- the very effective organisation of the children's day and the smooth transitions with an appropriate balance between free play and organised activities;
- the excellent links established with the parents, local primary school and a wide range of agencies within and beyond the local community;
- the well-embedded culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement which prioritises clearly the personal and professional development undertaken by the staff; and
- the outstanding leadership provided and the dedicated and skilful professionalism of the staff and management committee.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup 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, the members of the management committee and the staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Approximately 76.5% of the parents responded to the questionnaire; they indicated that they are very pleased with the quality of the overall provision within the centre. Five parents also included a written comment; their written responses show that they appreciate the high levels of care and dedication shown by the staff to their children. The responses from the management committee and playgroup staff also fully endorse the work of the pre-school centre. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

