

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Little Hands Little Feet  
Pre-School, Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2012

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of playgroup centre:</b>	Little Hands Little Feet Pre-school
<b>Address:</b>	73 Malone Road BELFAST BT9 6SB
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary
<b>Date of inspection:</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	N/A

### 1. Details of Children

	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
<b>Total number of children:</b>		
attending the playgroup centre	13	-
in their immediate playgroup year	10	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	8	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
with English as an additional language	1	-
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	N/A	-

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	1	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	1	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
2½ hours	-	N/A

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	10
Percentage returned	80%
Number of written comments:	5

## **LITTLE HANDS LITTLE FEET PRE-SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT9 6SB (1CA-0590)**

1. Little Hands Little Feet Pre-School centre is part of the Little Hands Little Feet Day Care Centre in Derryvolgie House, situated on the Malone Road. The children who attend come from a wide catchment area. The session offering funded pre-school places through the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme (PEEP) operates as a part-time morning session. A small number of younger children, who are not funded as part of the PEEP, also attend this session. The centre is in its first year of receiving funding from the Department of Education as part of the PEEP.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this centre is good. The centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas 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 areas for improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children demonstrate good levels of independence as they freely select activities, name their own work and manage their daily routines. They interact confidently and respectfully with each other; their behaviour is excellent. The children show high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning and remain on task for sustained periods. The staff are aware of, and support effectively, a small number of children who still require adult support to engage fully and are sensitive to their needs.

4. Almost all of the children demonstrate well developed oral language and communication skills as they engage with the adults and one another. Many of the children show an interest in print and mark making when playing at a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities; a few are beginning to write their own names. On the day of the inspection, very few children were observed referring to the many books available to them, however, the wall displays indicated their positive response to books during world book week.

5. Many of the children enjoy taking on roles in the creative role play areas. The staff value the children's own creative ideas. Much of their art work is well developed and they engage enthusiastically and with skill at the range of creative activities available. On the day of the inspection, children used coloured plasticine creatively to make pictures; many of the children paint and draw detailed representations of figures and objects around them.

6. A majority of the children show an awareness of basic mathematical concepts and a few are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language as they count, sort and make comparisons. During the inspection, many of the children showed an interest in observation and discussion of the natural environment as they investigated the resources associated with a Spring theme. More experiences should be planned and provided by the staff to develop the children's interest in construction and early technology.

7. Many of the children use a range of tools such as brushes and scissors with confidence and competence. The children have regular access to outdoor play and the children can climb, jump and balance. They would benefit from further planned opportunities to promote energetic physical play during the session.

## PROVISION FOR LEARNING

8. The staff make good use is made of all the space available. They have worked very hard to develop a stimulating and attractive learning environment which supports the children independence and learning. The attractive displays celebrate the children's own work and the well presented range of resources and interest table promote their enthusiasm for investigation.

9. The very good quality and consistency of the staff's interaction with the children is a key strength of the centre. The staff are skilful in promoting purposeful play, they listen to the children's own ideas and extend effectively their thinking, language and learning. They are caring and encouraging in their approach with the children and are aware of those children who need additional support. Children with additional needs are identified early and there is close liaison with parents and other relevant services. There is evidence that they are making suitable progress In their learning and development .

10. The staff are making good progress in developing their written planning and systems for observing and assessing the children's progress. The staff demonstrate a shared understanding of the pre-school curriculum and implement the plans consistently. They should continue to develop this work further to ensure progression in all areas of learning and that there is a close match between the programme provided and the full range of stages of development within the group.

11. The staff are developing good links with the parents who are kept informed about the work of the centre through, for example, a regular newsletter and informative notice boards. The parents' involvement in the centre, through visiting, to talking about their work or reading to the children, is encouraged and valued by the staff. Good use is made of visitors from the wider community to enhance the children's learning experiences. Links to the wide range of primary schools to which the children will transfer are at an early stage of development.

12. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. The staff provide an inclusive, caring and happy environment for the children which promotes their confidence and self-esteem.

13. The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following areas need to be addressed:

- the staff in the pre-school room need to complete their Child Protection training, scheduled for May 2012; and
- the policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated to reflect the minor issues identified by the inspection team and reported orally to the staff.

14. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through a healthy break and regular outdoor play, which encourage the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

15. The leader of the pre-school room is a good role model in her work with the children. She is also effective in leading the developmental work within the centre in her role as independent early years specialist (EYS). The staff work together closely as a team and are well supported by the management.

16. The staff have worked hard to bring about considerable improvements to the quality of the provision in recent months. They are reflective in their practice and have demonstrated their commitment to developing high quality pre-school education in the centre. They have started to identify priorities and the associated actions to be taken for future development. The current action plan should now be updated in line with the inspection findings.

**17. The key strengths in this playgroup are:**

- the caring and inclusive ethos based on good relationships with the children;
- the attractive and stimulating learning environment within the playroom;
- the broad and balanced pre-school curriculum which provides good or very good opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the high quality of the staff's interactions with the children which promote their independence, social skills, language and thinking;
- the children's good levels of motivation, enjoyment and progress in their learning; and
- the effective leadership of the centre's own EYS and the hard working staff team.

**18. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention: the staff need to**

- continue to develop the planning process to ensure all areas of the curriculum are resourced and developed fully both indoors and outdoors; and
- use the assessment information to ensure that the planned programme and adult support is tailored closely to the full range of children's needs and abilities.

19. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this centre is good. The centre has strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the centre's progress on the areas for improvement.

### QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the management group and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The eight responses from the parents all indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision. In particular, they reported their appreciation of the progress made by their children, the happy, caring environment and the approachable and professional staff.

The responses from the management group indicated a high level of confidence in the staff as a team and in the work of the centre. There was less satisfaction with the opportunities for the management team to meet regularly, to have training specific to their role and have access to the wider educational support services.

The staff returns indicated a strong sense of team work among the staff in implementing a programme which meets the all round development of each child.

All of the key messages from the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- On the day of the inspection, access via the front door of the building was not sufficiently secure on occasions during the morning session.



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2012

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](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

