

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Oaks Pre-School
Playgroup, Lambeg, Lisburn

Report of an Inspection
in February 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Oaks Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	109 Queensway Lambeg LISBURN County Antrim BT27 4QS
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	22 February 2011
Date of previous inspection:	25 May 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school centre	24	-
in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
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	1	-
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	78%	-

* 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
3 hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	41.7%
Number of written comments:	4

LITTLE OAKS PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, LAMBEG, LISBURN, BT27 4QS (4BB-0159)

1. Little Oaks Pre-School is accommodated in St Colman's Parish Centre, Lambeg, Lisburn. The playgroup has access to an outdoor play area.

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

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. During the inspection, all the children were engaged in collaborative and purposeful play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They demonstrate good levels of independence in their selection of play resources and materials to create their own paintings and creative art work. The children play imaginatively during role-play opportunities, develop their problem-solving skills especially through sand and water play, and they practise their early mark-making through a good range of writing and drawing materials.

4. Overall, the children make good progress in the acquisition of their language skills. There is strong encouragement for the children to develop an interest in books; the children pay close attention during the very good story sessions, explore information books during their play, and make suggestions about their preferred stories, songs and rhymes. The children talk confidently about their play and engage enthusiastically in the small and large group sessions. The children who require additional support regarding speech and language receive well-planned and relevant assistance.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There are good learning opportunities in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum; of significant note are the development of the children's personal, social and emotional well-being and their understanding of early mathematical concepts. The daily session is well-organised with the purposeful use of all of the time available for learning. The adult interactions with the children are consistently of a good quality, with examples of very good interactions which extend the children's imaginative responses and decision-making skills.

6. The quality of the planning is good; it identifies clearly the intended learning and guides the staff in their day-to-day work with the children. The staff's daily and weekly evaluation of the children's progress informs well the planning that enables them to meet the children's individual learning needs.

7. The parents are kept well-informed about the learning programmes and the work of the playgroup through monthly newsletters that enables them to reinforce the children's learning at home. Very good links are maintained with the local primary school in which most of the children will be enrolled.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. Among the strengths are the very good working relationships between the staff and the children, the consistent approach applied by all of the staff in promoting positive behaviour, and the welcoming atmosphere that permeates throughout the playgroup.

9. The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

10. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the healthy snack routines and the regular opportunities for outdoor play, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader is a very good role-model and is effective in promoting a strong team-spirit among the dedicated staff. They plan and evaluate the programme together and all contribute to the successful operation of the playgroup. The development plan and associated action plans identify appropriate areas for development; there is a need to develop further the procedures for the evaluation of progress on the priorities. During the last year, there has been a break in support from the early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation. It would be beneficial for the staff to have consistent EYS support to develop greater rigour to the self-evaluation process leading to improvement.

12. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the well-settled and highly motivated children;
- the caring and supportive ethos based on the very good working relationships;
- the good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the consistently good quality of the adult interactions with the children; and
- the effective leader and the skilled staff team.

13. The priority identified for further development includes the need:

- to develop a more rigorous approach to self-evaluation.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup'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, management committee and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Ten (approximately 42%) of the parents responded to the questionnaires and four made an additional written comment. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work. The responses from the management committee and the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and the management committee of the playgroup.

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