

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lower Mourne Pre-School
Playgroup, Newry

Report of an Inspection
in October 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Lower Mourne Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	Longstone Community Hall 65-67 Longstone Road Annalong NEWRY Co Down BT34 4UZ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	11 October 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	16	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	12	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	12	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	**	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	**	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	**	-
• with English as an additional language	**	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	**	-
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	89.7%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

** Figures above all under 5

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	2	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	0
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
3 hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Number returned:	50%
Number of written comments:	1

LOWER MOURNE PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, ANNALONG, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT34 4UZ (5AB-0211)

1. Lower Mourne Pre-School is situated in the Longstone Community Hall outside the village of Annalong. The staff make good use of the accommodation and have created distinct areas of play for the children including a large area for physical play.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school 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 are well settled and some are able to sustain interest in play for lengthy periods of time. Routines are well established and the children are confident in making choices and are developing appropriate levels of independence for the time of year.

4. The children's language development is effectively promoted through listening to stories, joining in rhymes and songs and engaging in conversations during play. Most of the children have developed good fine motor skills and have opportunities to draw, paint and engage in appropriate mark-making using a variety of tools.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is of a good standard. The staff use opportunities that arise through the course of play to promote the children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. In particular, the children are developing good mathematical understanding and a keen interest in the world around them.

6. The staff work hard to provide an interesting and varied pre-school programme through the use of themes and topics and use a key worker system to monitor the children's responses to the planned activities. They are aware of the need to develop more varied and challenging opportunities for outdoor physical play.

7. A variety of effective methods, such as an Open Day in June, monthly newsletters, a parents' notice board and an information booklet have been designed to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the centre and to highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. In addition, there are regular meetings to inform the parents about the children's progress and development and an end of year 'graduation ceremony'.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere based on very good working relationships in the playroom.

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

10. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have, for example, access to healthy daily snacks and regular opportunities to engage in range of physical activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader was recently appointed in a permanent capacity and effectively promotes good teamwork among the staff who all contribute to the good standards achieved by the children. She is well-supported by the management group.

12. The staff are committed to the future development of the provision and are at an early stage in the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement. The centres early years specialist (EYS) provides good support and advice to the staff.

13. The key strengths of this pre-school centre include:

- the well settled children who display good levels of independence;
- the many instances of good quality interaction between the staff and the children;
- the good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the good links established with the parents;
- the well established routines and good use made of the accommodation; and
- the effective leader and hard-working team.

14. The areas for improvement include:

- to further develop the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement; and
- review aspects of the provision for outdoor physical play.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school 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 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 staff and the management committee to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. The responses were all very positive about the quality of the pre-school provision.

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