

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mullanaskea Pre-School
Centre, Enniskillen

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Mullanaska Pre-School Centre
Address:	Garvary ENNISKILLEN Co Fermanagh BT94 3AD
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	8 June 2011
Date of previous inspection:	3 November 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	26	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	2	-
• 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	-
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	95%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: **	
Students	0
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	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	57.7%
Number of written comments:	5

MULLANASKEA PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE, ENNISKILLEN, CO Fermanagh, BT94 3AD (2BB-0062)

1. Mullanaska Pre-School Centre is accommodated in purpose designed accommodation in the grounds of St Patrick's Primary School, Mullanaska. The children enrolled are from the surrounding rural area. The leader was in post at the time of the previous two inspections in 1999 and 2004. She was an assistant at the time of inspection in 1999 and took over as leader in March 2000. The staff is all newly appointed since the last inspection. Currently, the applications for places exceed the number of available enrolments.

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 are confident and absorbed in their play and learning. They are friendly and at ease with the staff who supports them very well in their learning. The children's behaviour is exemplary and many have formed friendships and collaborate well by sharing ideas during play. The children demonstrate good levels of independence in attending to their own needs and are keen to discuss their experiences and express their ideas in group situations such as story and snack time.

4. The staff effectively promotes the children's language development. There are appropriate early identification and effective intervention strategies to support the children to develop talking and listening skills and to improve their range of vocabulary often effectively developed through singing and musical activities. During the inspection, the children were often observed enjoying books, and listening to and responding to rhythm and tempo in music. The staff models extensive vocabulary and the children were observed listening and responding to their open-ended questions about a range of ideas to do with their play and interests. The children readily turn to mark-making for early writing development and are able to draw pictures and create three-dimensional models showing early representation of their ideas.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a high standard and is often outstanding; the staff uses every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. During the inspection the staff engaged purposefully with the children, listened to them and built effectively on their ideas and interests. In the best practice observed they encouraged the children to recall, role-play and problem-solve and used mathematical language well to develop early mathematical concepts. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable ensures the sessions flow smoothly and that all of the time is used well for learning.

6. The staff has developed comprehensive planning and assessment methods take account of a variety of themes and the children's interests to provide a varied programme with appropriate progression in learning. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded and assessed and the information is used to inform future planning and is also shared with the parents.

7. The playgroup provides very good early identification of, and support for, the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. Effective links have been established with appropriate support agencies, for example the speech therapist, who has worked closely with the staff on occasions in addressing the difficulties experienced by some of the children. There is evidence to show, that as a result of the programme of support, the children make good progress.

8. A variety of effective methods such as an information booklet, regular newsletters and a parents' noticeboard are used to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the playgroup and highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. Very good links have been established with the local feeder primary schools with an appropriate emphasis on smooth transitions for the children.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. There is a welcoming and caring atmosphere based on very good working relationships at all levels.

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

11. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have, for example, access to healthy daily snacks and they have regular opportunities to play outdoors and engage in a range of energetic physical activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader is highly organised and is an outstanding leader and manager of the playgroup. She is a very good role-model in her work in the playroom and promotes a strong sense of team-spirit among the staff who shares her commitment to ongoing improvement and development. All of the staff contributes to the good standards achieved by the children. The management committee are highly supportive of the staff in their work and to the future development of the playgroup.

13. The process of self-evaluation is well-developed in terms of the focus placed on meeting the needs of the children through a broad and balanced programme. A three-year development plan ensures that additional priorities and targets for future development are identified. The staff reports that they have very good working relationships with their independent early years specialist (EYS) who has identified appropriate areas for development and provides very good advice, support and guidance to the staff and the management committee.

14. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the warm and caring staff who promote the children's confidence within a safe and secure learning environment;
- the outstanding provision for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and the children's all round achievements;
- the high levels of sustained interaction between the staff and the children which effectively has developed the children's concentrated learning;
- the effective range of strategies to develop the children's language and understanding and to address the children's additional needs;

- the support of the EYS in the development of the pre-school provision; and
- the leader's expertise in early years education and her organisational skills, and the competent staff who work effectively as a team supported by the management committee.

15. 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 and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fifteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and five made additional written comments; the comments were very positive and indicate a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the progress made by their children and the care shown to them by the staff. The responses from the three staff and six management group questionnaires were wholly positive. A summary of all the responses has been shared with the staff and chair of the management group.

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