

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Newtownbutler Cross-  
Community Playgroup,  
Co Fermanagh

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2011

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Newtownbutler Cross-Community Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Galloon Gardens NEWTOWNBUTLER Co Fermanagh BT92 8GT
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	30 March 2011
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	13 October 2003

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	26	17
• in their immediate pre-school year	23	12
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	23	12
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	1
• with a statement of special educational needs	1	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	1
• with English as an additional language	0	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	1	1
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	95%	N/A

\* 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	0	6
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	5
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

<b>Number of: **</b>	
Students	1
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	2½ hours	186

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	35
Percentage returned:	68.6%
Number of written comments:	11

## **NEWTOWNBUTLER CROSS-COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, CO FERMANAGH, BT92 8GT (2AB-0222)**

1. Newtownbutler Cross-Community Playgroup is accommodated in a purpose-built building in the village of Newtownbutler, Co Fermanagh. The children come from the surrounding rural area. A new leader was appointed in 2005 who maintains an overview of both sessions; she is also the lead adult during the morning session.

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. The staff work hard to meet the children's wide range of individual needs and most of the children display good to very good levels of concentration and interest in the stimulating range of activities provided. There is a need to ensure that the personal, social and emotional development of a small group of children is monitored more effectively and that all children are supported to learn to play in a settled and concentrated manner. During the inspection, in the best practice the children were often observed making choices, sharing and turn-taking; they are effectively developing a range of skills including observation in, and investigation of, the world around them.

4. The children are making appropriate progress in developing language skills. The staff has accessed training to promote language development and has availed of the services of the SureStart speech therapist to screen the children in need of speech therapy. They often model vocabulary and support the children to develop their talking and listening skills through the use of stories and rhymes. The staff is committed to the further development of the provision for language and the ongoing capacity-building of the staff to support the children identified with speech and language difficulties. The new parents' room under construction is to be utilised for the development of speech and language programmes.

### **PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The indoor and outdoor learning environment is stimulating and attractively presented with an excellent range of resources enhanced by authentic materials. Careful consideration is given to the effective use of all the space to create interesting areas of learning. Good use is made of the children's own art work, photographs and interest areas related to the current theme of spring. The playgroup's programme is broad and balanced and offers good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.

6. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is good and, at times, very good. The staff listens and responds to the children's ideas and effectively develops their language and thinking skills. The daily timetable is effectively organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. There is a need to develop further the learning to be promoted from the daily routines in order to develop further the children's decision-making skills and sense of responsibility for the care of the play materials.

7. The staff has worked hard to plan an effective programme to meet the needs of the children. They plan activities through the use of themes and identify progression in the use of the resources; in the best practice, they use the information gathered in the assessment of the children's responses to the activities to plan for progression in their subsequent learning.

8. The parents are treated as partners in their children's education. They are appropriately involved at the beginning and end of each session; the staff effectively interacts with them informally in an open and welcoming manner about their children's achievements. There are good formalised procedures for communicating with the parents and sharing appropriate information about the children's progress and development.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. The staff treats the children with care and provides a safe environment which is encouraging the children to develop independence.

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, for example, as part of the snack routine the children are encouraged to be independent and make choices of healthy food. The outdoor provision encourages the children to adopt healthier lifestyles and to engage in challenging energetic play.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The playgroup leader-in-charge is committed to educational improvement and staff development; she is well-organised with a clear vision for high quality provision and has successfully acquired capital funding to extend the playgroup provision. She ensures a consistent approach to the leadership and management, organisation of the routines and the planning for, and assessment of, learning in the two sessions. There is an excellent team-working ethos in the playgroup.

13. The staff has a three year development plan and action plans to improve the provision and has appropriately identified the need to develop further the planning and assessment methods. The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation has effectively supported the group for three years; she has appropriately focused on the development of the pre-school programme and provided good advice, guidance and support on the management of the expansion of the playgroup provision.

#### **14. The key strengths in this playgroup include:**

- the stimulating learning environment, creative activities and the high quality resources to implement a comprehensive pre-school programme;
- the children's responsiveness to the staff expectations for investigation and exploration through play;
- the good development of the children's play and learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the good to very good involvement of the staff in the children's play in order to develop the children's language and understanding according to the varying stages of development;

- the helpful and informative links with the parents to encourage parental involvement in the children's learning; and
- the hard-working and supportive staff and the effectiveness of the leader-in-charge in leading improvements to the pre-school building and in improving the quality of the pre-school programme.

**15. The area for improvement includes the need:**

- to develop further the area of learning for personal, social and emotional development with a focus on promoting concentrated learning.

16. 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 in addressing 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 a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty-four of the parents responded to the questionnaire and eleven made additional written comments. Almost all of the comments were highly positive and indicate a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the work of the staff in ensuring high quality experiences for the children and indicated that the playgroup was highly regarded in the community. The responses from the staff and the management group were positive and highlighted the commitment of all to the development of the playgroup. A summary of the responses has been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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