

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Playlinks Playgroup,
Strangford

Report of an Inspection
in October 2012

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Playlinks Playgroup
Address:	The Playing Fields The Links STRANGFORD Co Down BT30 7NB
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	1 October 2012
Date of previous inspection:	4 June 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	16	-
in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
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	1	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	86%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1	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
2½ hours	-	

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	14
Percentage returned	64.29%
Number of written comments:	3

1. Introduction

Playlinks Playgroup is situated in purpose-built mobile accommodation located in The Playing Fields, Strangford. Most of the children, who attend the playgroup, come from the local village and surrounding area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fourteen questionnaires were issued to the parents and 9 were returned with 3 written comments. All of the responses indicated a very good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, they appreciated the approachable and caring staff and they valued the good range of play activities provided for the children. There were two responses from the management group and one response from the staff to the questionnaires; all were very positive. The reporting inspector discussed any matters raised through the questionnaires with the leaders and the members of the management group who attended the oral report back.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

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 will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are well settled for the time of year and they engage in sustained and purposeful play activities.
- The children's language and communication skills are generally well developed. Most of the children engage in a good quality of imaginative role-play, especially in the bakery and home areas; a small number of children are dependent on the staff for support in developing their play. The children are developing a good understanding of the early mathematical concepts, such as, use of money, size, capacity and positional language.

- Most of the children access the resources independently, especially relating to creative art and technological activities. They demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their learning environment through their participation in the daily routines.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The provision for pastoral care within this pre-school is 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.
- The staff's interactions with the children are consistently of a good quality, with examples of very good interactions that extend the children's imaginative responses and decision-making skills. They listen to the children's own ideas and develop language and learning effectively through the play activities.
- The short-term planning 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 the planning enabling them to meet increasingly the children's individual learning needs.
- The pre-school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, through the provision of a fruit break and healthy drinks. The children have regular access to a good quality of outdoor, energetic play.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The members of staff have identified appropriately, through the action plans, the need to develop further the progression in the outdoor physical play and to refine aspects of their planning.
- The staff development programme has benefitted from the recent well-informed support and advice given by the early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation. The staff will require further support from their early years specialist to sustain the improvement in the quality of the provision.

CONCLUSION

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 area for improvement includes the need:

- to develop further the planning to meet the individual needs and interests of the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

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