

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rainbow Playgroup,
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Rainbow Playgroup
Address:	Sunnylands Community Centre 22 Bridewell Drive CARRICKFERGUS Co Antrim BT38 8JW
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	8 March 2012
Date of previous inspection:	9 March 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	25	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	12	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	12	-
• 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	16	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	93%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	2
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	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
2½ hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	12
Percentage returned:	83.3%
Number of written comments:	5

RAINBOW PLAYGROUP, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 8JW (3AB-0100)

1. Rainbow Playgroup is located in the main hall in the Sunnylands Community Centre in Carrickfergus. Since the last inspection, there have been a few changes in staffing including the appointment of a new leader and an assistant. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding area.

2. In the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are relaxed and happy; they settle quickly and enthusiastically to their chosen activities, make independent choices and have a positive attitude to their play and learning. Nearly all of the children demonstrate very good progress in their development for the time of year. Their behaviour is exemplary; they respond very well to the daily routines and often engage with high levels of interest in extended periods of concentrated play.

4. The planned programme is broad and varied and provides very good opportunities to stimulate the children's interest and thinking. There is good promotion of the children's early language skills through, for example, a wide range of appropriate resources including books, jigsaws, photographs and topical interest areas. A majority of the children can talk confidently about their work and achievements and demonstrate good levels of sustained attention during stories, rhymes and music making sessions. Good opportunities are provided for the children to experiment with mark making and early writing and much of the art work produced by the children is representational and of a high quality. The staff are skilful in promoting mathematical language through the various activities and routines and as a result, many of the children show an interest in and understanding of basic shape, number and pattern.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff work very hard to create an interesting learning environment for the children and have to set up and clear away the playroom every day as the hall is used by other groups in the community. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a high standard and on occasions during the inspection it was excellent. The staff place much emphasis on promoting the children's self-esteem and often support and extend their language, thinking skills and independence.

6. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable ensures a good balance between free play and activities organised by the staff. The children understand and respond very positively to their routines and transitions throughout the session. The playgroup has access to a small enclosed outdoor space and a larger all weather pitch for physical play. The staff need to provide more regular opportunities for the children to experience outdoor play.

7. The staff plan an interesting and varied programme for the children throughout the year based on themes and topics. The staff need to review the method for evaluating the planning to ensure it provides a broader overview of the children's responses across all areas of the curriculum and reflects these in future planning. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded by the staff and shared with the parents regularly throughout the year.

8. The playgroup provides very good support for those children identified with special educational needs. The children's needs are identified early and documented appropriately. Individual education plans have been developed to support the children and effective links established with the parents and other health professionals.

9. The communication and links with the parents are very effective. Good links have been established with local feeder primary schools and other support agencies and professionals involved with the children and their families.

10. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The strengths include, for example, the priority given to the care, emotional well-being and development of the children and the excellent relationships at all levels.

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

12. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the children have access to a healthy snack and they have daily opportunities to engage in physical activity. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

13. The leader promotes a strong team spirit among the staff; they are all very committed to ensuring high quality outcomes for all the children and their families. A good start has been made in developing the process of self-evaluation. The development plan identifies a range of priorities and actions for future development.

14. The staff receive support from an early years specialist (EYS) employed by the Early Years Organisation; they report very good working relationships with and helpful support from their EYS.

15. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the very positive ethos that contributes to high quality care and provision for the children;
- the consistently high quality of the interaction between the staff and the children;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care, including the high priority given to the care, emotional well-being and development of the children;
- the thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable;
- the broad and balanced programme for learning which stimulates the children's interest and meets well their individual learning needs; and
- the very good leadership supported by a committed and hard-working team.

16. In the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and 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. Most of the parents responded to the questionnaire and a majority of them made additional written comments; all of the returns indicate a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the centre's work. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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