

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rascals Community Playgroup,
Gortin

Report of an Inspection
in May 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Rascals Community Playgroup
Address:	62 Main Street Gortin OMAGH Co Tyrone BT79 8NH
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	30 May 2012
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	16	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
• funded by Department of Education	14	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	*	-
• 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	89.9%	-

* Denotes figure fewer than 5

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
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:	16
Number returned:	12
Number of written comments:	*

RASCALS COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, GORTIN, CO TYRONE, BT79 8NH (2AB-0056)

1. Rascals Community Playgroup is located in Gortin town centre and provides daily pre-school sessions for the children in the surrounding local area. The playgroup accommodation is located in the local community centre and there is access to a small outdoor area. The leader and most of the staff have been in post since the last inspection in 2005.

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 staff prepare carefully the areas of play providing a wide range of stimulating activities for the children's play. The children and their parents are welcomed warmly on arrival and the children settle quickly to play. The staff place a high priority on the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and there is a consistent policy of positive behaviour management. The children have acquired a very good range of skills since joining the playgroup. Most of the children are independent, confident in making choices and have formed friendships. They have acquired very good listening skills, appear secure in their routines and can play for sustained periods of time, often accessing their own resources to extend their play and learning.

4. The children's language development is promoted effectively through listening to stories, reciting nursery rhymes, role play and engaging in conversations during play. Most of the children have developed good fine motor skills and can draw, paint and engage in appropriate mark-making for their ages and stages of development. The staff display and celebrate the children's art work throughout the playrooms. These displays along with themed books and interest areas help to stimulate the children's problem-solving skills and imaginative play; for example, during the inspection, a group of children were able to find information about mixing colours from a wallchart.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There are many instances of outstanding quality interaction between the staff and the children; the staff use every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. The children's learning arises naturally from the play and their ideas and, as a result, the children are developing good mathematical understanding and a good range of vocabulary about the world around them.

6. The staff work hard to plan for and successfully provide a broad and balanced pre-school programme. The use of themes provides variety across the year and the staff appropriately take account of the progression in the activities and the resources throughout the year. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded termly. The link between the assessment and the planning methods is underdeveloped to consistently record the children's day-to-day progress.

7. The staff are aware of and take account of the children's range of language and developmental needs. They maintain good communication with the parents. The staff has established effective links with a range of interagency support services and an outreach centre. There are good processes in place to identify and plan for the children with additional needs.

8. A variety of effective methods, such as regular newsletters and a parents' notice board, have been designed to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the playgroup 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 their children's progress and development.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. There is a caring atmosphere based on very good working relationships in the playroom among the children, staff, parents and management group.

10. At the time of the inspection, the playgroup had very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

11. The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The parents support effectively the healthy eating policy and the children are encouraged to eat healthy snacks.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader of the playgroup is skilful, well-organised and dedicated to high quality provision for the children. The deputy leader is supportive and all the staff work effectively as a team in the best interests of the children. The management group are encouraging of the work of the staff and raise funds to ensure the sustainability of the playgroup. The staff make effective use of the resources to provide very good quality pre-school provision.

13. A three-year development plan ensures that additional priorities and targets for future development are identified. The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) provides regular and consistent support and has provided effective support in most of the areas requested by the playgroup staff. It will be appropriate for the staff, supported by their EYS, to focus on the areas for development identified in the three year development plan and to gather evidence of the progress made.

14. The key strengths of this playgroup include:

- the welcoming staff and the caring, inclusive and safe learning environment;
- the children's motivation to learn as a result of the stimulating activities and the well-planned provision of experiences in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the children's excellent listening skills and high levels of independence in making choices;
- the many instances of outstanding interaction between the staff and the children that sustained the children's involvement in their play and effectively promoted concentrated learning at every opportunity;
- the children's very good progress and development and the effective arrangements and links made to support children with additional needs; and
- the skilful, well-organised and dedicated leader who is well-supported by the hard-working staff.

15. 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, the staff and the management committee to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. The responses were all positive about the quality of the pre-school provision. In addition the parents added written comments praising the approach and caring staff that provide a high standard of pre-school education. The management group raised concerns about the lack of training and expectations on them to provide significant inputs to support the staff in their work beyond fundraising events.

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