

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Roundabout Playgroup,
Dungiven

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Roundabout Playgroup
Address:	8 Beech Road Gortnaghey DUNGIVEN Co Londonderry BT47 4QB
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	19 May 2011
Date of previous inspection:	27 May 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	20	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
• 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	1	-
• 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	95.6%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

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	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	20
Percentage returned:	35%
Number of written comments:	5

ROUNABOUT PLAYGROUP, GORTNAGHEY, DUNGIVEN, CO LONDONDERRY, BT47 4QB (2AB-0074)

1. Roundabout Playgroup is accommodated in a large playroom in a converted building in Gortnaghey. The children come from the surrounding rural area. The leader was appointed in 2004. The playgroup currently does not have an outdoor area for play; the staff have arrangements in place to make regular use of local facilities and they use the large playroom for physical play on a daily basis.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area 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 area for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children display very good levels of concentration and interest in the wide range of activities provided in the playroom. They respond well to the staff's expectations and learn effectively within a caring environment. During the inspection, the children engaged well in a wide range of stimulating activities with the staff and appeared happy and settled. They were often observed making choices, sharing and turn-taking and are effectively developing a range of skills including mathematical, personal, social and emotional, and language skills.

4. The children's language development is a priority; the staff often model vocabulary and support the children to listen, understand and use a broader range of language to communicate. During the inspection, the adults were observed acting as effective role-models in the imaginative and construction play areas; they effectively engaged the children in learning about the world around them and sustained interaction at a high level with the children about their play. The children's language is developing effectively as a result of the close involvement of the staff in the children's learning.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The learning environment is stimulating and attractively presented with a good range of resources enhanced by natural materials. Careful consideration is given to the effective use of all the space to create interesting areas of learning. The children's own art work is displayed throughout the playroom. The playgroup's curriculum is broad and balanced and offers good opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum.

6. The quality of the staff interaction is good and at times very good. The staff listen and respond to the children's ideas and effectively develop 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. The daily snack, and other necessary routines, are organised effectively to develop the children's decision-making skills, independence, social and conversational skills.

7. The staff have in place long-, medium- and short-term plans. As a result of daily observations, the staff introduce appropriate resources and language which build on the children's changing needs and interests. The staff need to develop further the planning at all levels to ensure a clearer focus on all the learning.

8. The parents are treated as partners in their children's education. They are appropriately involved at the beginning and end of the day; the staff effectively interacts with them in an open and welcoming manner about the children's achievements. There are good procedures for communicating with the parents and sharing appropriate information about the children. Throughout the year the parents are invited to meetings to share information about their children's progress and development. The playgroup has developed good links with the local primary schools to ensure smooth transitions for the children from the playgroup to school.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a supportive environment which is helping the children to grow in confidence, independence and consideration for others.

10. The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The staff now needs to ensure that all parents who help with outings are vetted and that the management committee receive up-to-date training regarding child protection procedures.

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, use mathematical language and make choices of healthy food.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The playgroup has operated with fluctuations in numbers of funded children over the recent years and the management committee and the staff have worked hard to maintain the voluntary pre-school provision. The leader is a very good role-model in her work with the children and is ably-assisted by the assistants in the development of a broad and balanced pre-school programme. There is a need to develop further the leadership and management of the playgroup, at all levels and to ensure that the staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in the development planning process, in order to effectively manage the sustainability of the pre-school provision.

13. The staff has a development plan and action plans to improve the provision. The development plan appropriately identifies the need to enhance the outdoor play provision. There is a need to develop a more collegial approach between the playgroup and the management group in the self-evaluation process in order to develop a systematic review of policies and the development plan.

14. During this school year there has been a break in support from the early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation. There is a need for the management group and the staff to work closely with the EYS to address the area identified at the time of the inspection.

15. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the caring, ethos and the exemplary behaviour of the children, who display very good attitudes to learning;
- the bright attractive and stimulating learning environment;
- the well established routines which effectively promote high levels of independence in all the children;

- the development of the children's learning in all areas of the pre-school programme especially the very good development of mathematical skills and knowledge of the world around them;
- the interactions of the staff with the children to promote learning which are consistently good and at times very good; and
- the committed, hard-working and enthusiastic leader and staff who provide a broad and balanced pre-school programme.

16. The area for improvement is the need:

- to develop further all aspects of the playgroup's' planning in order to ensure a sharper focus on the learning to be promoted.

17. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area 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. Seven of the parents responded to the questionnaire and five made additional written comments. All of the comments were positive and indicate a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, the caring and hard-working staff and how their children enjoyed their time in the playgroup. The responses from the staff and the management group were positive and highlight 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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