

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Small Fry Community  
Playgroup, Maguiresbridge

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2011

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Small Fry Community Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Killyshambally MAGUIRESBRIDGE Co Fermanagh BT94 4RY
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	20 January 2011
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	14 May 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	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
• 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	3	-
• with English as an additional language	1	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	90%	-

\* 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	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

<b>Number of: **</b>	
Students	0
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>
3 hours	-	190

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	76.9%
Number of written comments:	9

## **SMALL FRY COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, MAGUIRESBRIDGE, CO FERNANAGH, BT94 4RY (2AB-0457)**

1. Small Fry Community Playgroup is accommodated in purpose designed accommodation in the village of Maguiresbridge. The children come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The leader has been in post for six years, and the deputy leader and assistant for five years.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children are well-motivated to learn, respond well to the staff's expectations and their behaviour is very good. They display high levels of interest in the wide range of activities and interesting resources provided in the learning environment. The quality of the play and learning is concentrated and, as a result, the children appear confident and are developing a wide range of skills such as investigation and exploration.

4. During the inspection, the children were often observed using appropriate social communication and mathematical language in play situations and in representing their own ideas through the use of wooden blocks, drawing pictures, painting and model-making. The children listened and responded to stories read by the staff and freely choose to turn to books; they have positive attitudes to early writing and enjoy mark-making.

### **PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The learning environment is bright and stimulating; careful consideration is given to the provision of good quality resources and the effective use of all the space to create safe and interesting areas of learning. Good use is made of the children's photographs and own art work, including three-dimensional models, to enhance the learning environment.

6. The staff plan effectively to address the wide range of varying language needs and a high priority is given to developing the children's language through sustained adult interactions and a love of stories. During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in valuable discussion about their play and experiences, and extended the children's language and learning through their participation as effective role-models in the play. There is appropriate early identification and referral to support services for the children identified with learning difficulties.

7. The playgroup's curriculum is broad and balanced; the activities provided offer very good opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum and promote effectively the children's all round development. The daily timetable is very well-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 mathematical language, independence, social and conversational skills.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the pre-school centre is outstanding. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a secure environment which is helping the children to grow in confidence, independence and to have consideration for others. There are excellent working relationships at all levels.

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

10. The pre-school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, as part of the snack routine the children are encouraged to try a range of 'healthy' foods from the weekly menu and they have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

11. The dedicated leader is an excellent role-model in her work with the children; she is well-organised and is skilful in promoting a strong team-spirit among the committed and hard-working staff. All of the staff have a caring approach to the children and are proactive in the development of the playgroup's provision and standards.

12. The playgroup has an appropriate development plan with identified targets for improvement. The staff have attended a range of training and development courses and there is evidence that this training is having a positive impact on the overall quality of the playgroup's provision. The playgroup is well-supported by the early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation; the staff clearly value this support and a self-evaluative culture has been established. The staff use effective methods of self-evaluation and there is evidence that the process has led to improvements in the children's learning experiences.

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

- the safe and caring learning environment which is stimulating and productive;
- the outstanding quality of the working relationships between the staff and the children, and the children's very good behaviour;
- the broad and balanced pre-school curriculum and the children's achievements, particularly in the development of mathematical language;
- the quality of the staff's interaction which sustains the children's concentrated play and learning;
- the support of the EYS in the development of the self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement methods which sustain effectively the ongoing development of the playgroup's provision to meet the needs of all the children; and
- the dedicated and skilful leader who is effectively supported by a hard-working, committed and proactive team.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup 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. Twenty of the parents responded to the questionnaire and nine made additional written comments; all of the comments were very positive and indicate a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the dedication and care shown to the children by the hard-working, friendly and approachable staff. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were wholly positive. A summary of the responses has been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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