

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Tiny Toons Community  
Playgroup Ltd, Downpatrick

Report of an Inspection  
in February 2011

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

### STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Tiny Toons Community Playgroup Ltd
<b>Address:</b>	3 Rourkes Link Bishopscourt Ballyhornan DOWNPATRICK Co Down BT30 7DQ
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	7 February 2011
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	3 November 2003

#### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	21	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
• 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	0	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• 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	74%	-

\* 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	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: **</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	1

\*\* 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:	14
Percentage returned:	71.4%
Number of written comments:	8

## **TINY TOONS COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP LTD, DOWNPATRICK, BT30 7DQ (4AB-0157)**

1. Tiny Toons Community Playgroup Ltd is accommodated within a self-contained unit in the Ballyhornan area of Downpatrick. Since the last inspection in 2003 there has been a complete change in staff.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. During the inspection, the majority of the children settled quickly and became well-engaged with the activities provided; a few remained unsettled throughout the session. Many of the children engage in purposeful play and sustain good levels of concentration and a few of them are beginning to work together collaboratively. The children generally displayed good levels of independence while accessing and tidying resources, self-registering and with their personal hygiene.

4. During the inspection, there were occasions when the children browsed in books; the newly developed library area was well-used during the session with opportunities for incidental storytelling by individual adults and small numbers of children as well as adult-led group story time. The children talk confidently about their play and in response to stories. Good opportunities were available for children to engage in early mark-making and writing; a few of the children are showing an interest in writing their own names.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. There is a warm, welcoming ethos within the playgroup and the adults work hard on a daily basis to create an attractive learning environment for the children. Many instances of good quality adult-child interactions were observed during the inspection; this good practice needs to be developed more consistently among the staff. Good opportunities for learning are provided by the staff across most of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. Early mathematical language is developed naturally and effectively during role-play, snack time and outdoor physical play. The daily routine provides a valuable session of extended play along with time for story, rhyme and physical play. It will be important that the staff reviews the current arrangements for snack time and the ending of each session in order to ensure that the learning opportunities at these times can be more fully exploited. The staff needs to also review the provision for those children who are finding it difficult to remain settled during the session and make more effective use of the range of positive behaviour strategies they currently employ.

6. The staff operates a key-worker system within the centre; the adults know the children well. They make good use of their observations to identify the children's achievements and stage of development. The written planning focuses effectively on ensuring progression in the children's learning across most of the areas of the pre-school curriculum, however, there is a need to develop further the planning and provision for the

World Around Us (WAU). The early year's specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) has given the staff beneficial support in reviewing their planning and the use they make of their evaluations of the learning and their observations of the progress of individual children. It is appropriate that staff continue to further develop this area in order to meet the needs of individual children.

7. The staff has developed good links with the parents. They provide three written reports and parent meetings each year to inform parents of their child's progress. Parents receive a monthly newsletter with information about events in the centre and a new website is in process. Parents' views and suggestions are sought through the use of a 'Parents' Comments Box' and questionnaires. This good work should be further enhanced by ensuring that parents are also given information about how they can support their children's learning at home.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. This is evidenced through the very good working relationships at all levels and by the staff's very good use of praise to promote the children's confidence, self-esteem and good behaviour.

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

10. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of healthy snacks and the regular opportunities for energetic play, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The pre-school leader has been in post for eighteen months and is enthusiastic, hard-working and well motivated. She has had good support from the EYS in developing her role as leader; she has established a good team approach to working collaboratively.

12. The staff has begun the process of self-evaluation by looking at the levels of the children's interest and engagement with the resources in a number of areas of the playroom and planning how to improve the provision and activities provided. With the support of their EYS, they have identified appropriate priorities for development such as the more effective use of the outdoor area.

**13. The key strengths of the playgroup include:**

- the welcoming environment and the very good relationships at all levels;
- the good opportunities for learning provided in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the good engagement of most of the children with their play;
- the many instances of good interaction between the staff and the children; and
- the good leadership and collaborative team approach of the staff.

**14. The areas for improvement include the need to:**

- continue to review the planning and the use made of evaluations and observations in order to best meet the needs of individual children; and
- develop further the provision in outdoor play and the curriculum area of WAU.

15. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

**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. Ten of the parents responded to the questionnaire and eight made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular the parents praised the dedication of the staff and how their children enjoyed the playgroup and the good progress they are making. The responses from the management committee and the staff questionnaires were also positive. The management committee commented on the importance of the playgroup within the local community and valued the efforts of the staff to provide a high standard of care for the children. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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