

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Woodburn Playgroup,
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection
in February 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Woodburn Playgroup
Address:	Oakfield Community Development Centre Oakfield Drive CARRICKFERGUS Co Antrim BT38 7SP
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	28 February 2011
Date of previous inspection:	3 June 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school centre	29	-
in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
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	92%	-

* 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	2	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: **	
Students	3
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
3 hours	-	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	28
Percentage returned:	42.85%
Number of written comments:	8

WOODBURN PLAYGROUP, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 7SP (3AB-0126)

1. Woodburn Playgroup operates within the premises of Oakfield Community Development Centre on Oakfield Drive in Carrickfergus. Since the last inspection in 2004, the playgroup has moved to these new premises. The playroom and activities for the children have to be set up and put away every day as the room is shared with other organisations.

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 demonstrate very good progress in their overall development in relation to their age and stage of development. They have settled very well and are familiar with their daily routines. They engage in periods of concentrated, productive and co-operative play. The majority of the children can talk about their experiences confidently and many can retell favourite stories; their drawings and paintings are beginning to show representational detail. They enjoy and respond to rhymes, songs and music making with great enthusiasm.

4. The development of the children's communication and language skills are key priorities throughout the playgroup. The planned programme, both indoors and outdoors, provides excellent opportunities to enrich the children's vocabulary. The majority of the children demonstrate very good progress in their listening and conversational skills and in their developing vocabulary. They can, for example, tidy up independently following the instructions on their 'tidy-up' personalised card and share recent experiences with confidence. All the children love books and stories; they join in enthusiastically during exciting story sessions. They are engaged in many opportunities in early mark-making and writing in many play areas. Very good links have been developed by the staff with the local speech and language therapist to seek advice and to reinforce individual support that a few children require to encourage the development of their vocabulary, listening skills and sound formation.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is excellent. The adults engage purposefully with the children, listening to them and building effectively on their ideas. They encourage the children to recall, predict and problem solve and they use mathematical language in a very natural and incidental way. The children's work is very thoughtfully presented, displays are carefully related to the chosen theme and space is used very imaginatively to create inviting interest areas which the children explore, investigate and share their discoveries. Resources are highly organised and easily accessible for the children to exercise choice and make decisions about their play. The organisation of the daily timetable provides a good balance of lengthy periods of free play and activities organised by the staff. The necessary routines such as snack, physical play, and story and song time promote the children's independence, social and self-management skills.

6. The staff has developed a sound and effective system for planning a stimulating and balanced programme. They regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, and the children's ideas and comments are clearly reflected in the choice of themes and topics. The staff has adopted a systematic, discrete and manageable approach to observing, tracking and recording the children's progress.

7. The staff work hard to keep the parents informed of and involved in the life and work of the playgroup. An informative induction booklet is shared with the parents to encourage them to engage in their children's learning and the parents comment formally on the children's progress reports throughout the year. The staff has developed strong pastoral links with the local rural primary schools to which most of their children transfer.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this playgroup is very good. Among the strengths are the priority given by the staff to the care and support of the children, the establishment of appropriate rules for safe play, the daily routines and the thought given to providing a stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

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 the children have access to healthy daily snacks and the daily opportunities to play outdoors which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader of the playgroup provides excellent leadership and manages the playgroup very effectively. She is an excellent role-model who sets very high standards for herself and others while supporting and encouraging her staff. She and the staff work tirelessly to establish a stimulating environment each day and to improve the quality of the provision for the children.

12. The comprehensive and well focused development plan identifies relevant priorities for improvement including the environment indoors and outdoors, the physical play programme, special educational needs and planning for learning. The staff has established successful methods of self-evaluation and there is clear evidence that the process had led to improvements in the children's learning experiences in recent years.

13. The playgroup has begun to receive support from a new early years specialist employed by the Early Years Organisation since October 2010. The staff report that the support they have received during these visits, is well focused; they appreciate the particular suggestions they have received in relation to the physical play programme and displaying the children's work.

14. The key strengths of this playgroup include:

- the very good progress being made by the children in relation to their age and stage of development, in particular, their language and communication skills, creative skills and their interest in the curriculum area of the world around us;
- the high quality of the staff interaction in promoting the children's care, learning and development;
- the highly effective methods of planning and assessment;
- the high quality and progression of the pre-school programme offered to the children;

- the outstanding leadership provided and the competent and supportive staff who work well as a team; and
- the well embedded culture for self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement within all aspects of the provision.

15. 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, staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twelve 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 centre's work; in particular the parents praised the level of care and dedication of the staff and how their children enjoyed the playgroup and the progress they had made. The responses from the management committee and the staff questionnaires were also highly positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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