



*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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

**Aghagallon Playgroup
Lurgan**

Inspected: June 2009

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Aghagallon Playgroup
Address:	3 Aghalee Road Aghagallon LURGAN Co Armagh BT67 0AR
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	4 June 2009
Date of previous inspection:	21 January 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	19	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	19	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	19	-
• 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	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	90%	-

* 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	0	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
3 hours	-	191

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	39%
Number of written comments:	7

AGHAGALLON PLAYGROUP, LURGAN, CO ARMAGH, BT67 0AR (5AB-0202)

1. Aghagallon Playgroup is situated on the Aghalee Road in Aghagallon. It serves the pre-school population of the immediate area. The playgroup is located in a first floor hall in the Parish community centre. It shares the accommodation with other community groups and the staff are required to set up and clear the playroom most days. The centre has recently acquired the use of a small enclosed outdoor play area which is situated within the grounds of the neighbouring primary school. There are currently 19 children who attend the centre on a full-time basis and nine who attend part-time. Three children have been identified as having additional needs. Since the last inspection there has been a change of leader and one other member of staff. The leader has been in post for two years.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the management group and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Almost 40% of the parents responded to the questionnaire and seven made additional written comments.

The responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision. They are all very appreciative of:

- the wide range of learning activities provided for the children; and
- the warm, welcoming staff who encourage the children to do their best.

The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive and supportive of the work of the playgroup. In particular the management group appreciate the patient, understanding staff and their effective team-work. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and were shared with the staff and management group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the playgroup is good. There are good working relationships at all levels, the staff work hard on a daily basis to create a welcoming learning environment for the children, and they liaise closely with the parents in order to meet the children's needs.

4. The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following areas need to be addressed:

- the staff and designated child protection member of the management committee need to update their training in child protection procedures; and
- the staff need to develop a more systematic approach to the risk assessment process for educational visits.

5. The playgroup gives satisfactory attention to developing aspects of healthy eating and physical activity. The children are provided with fruit as part of their morning snack and have the opportunity for regular physical activity. The staff need to ensure that the physical play sessions are purposeful and appropriately organised.

6. The main strengths within the pre-school centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- There is a positive, caring ethos in the playgroup; the children appear happy and the staff use the available space appropriately to provide a wide range of play activities and interest areas.
- There are satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum; the formal and informal opportunities for the children to handle and enjoy books and their enjoyment in mixing paints are particular strengths of the provision.
- The staff have made good efforts to identify and address individual children's additional learning needs and to maintain effective liaison with parents about their progress.
- The staff are developing a systematic approach to the review of the playgroup's policies in order to guide their practice.
- The leader and staff team are dedicated, hard-working and committed to the development of the pre-school provision in this centre.

7. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.

- The planning of the programme needs further development in order to guide the staff more effectively in their day-to-day work with the children and to raise the overall quality of the children's learning.
- The layout of the playroom needs to be reviewed in order to create clearly defined learning areas and to exploit more effectively the learning potential of the activities provided for the children.

8. The staff have started to develop some methods of self-evaluation. Although this work is at an early stage, some progress has been made in seeking the views of parents.

9. There has been a lack of consistency in the availability of early years specialist (EYS) support throughout the year. The contribution made by the centre's EYS up to the end of the first term of the current year had some strengths including assistance in the development of a parent's information booklet. However, the staff report that they have had only limited support from an EYS for a period of some months. It will be important for the recently assigned EYS to work closely with the staff in order to address the key areas for improvement.

10. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning 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 will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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