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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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

**Alphabet Playgroup
Greenisland**

Inspected: March 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Alphabet Playgroup
Address:	Greenisland Community Centre Glassillian Grove GREENISLAND Co Antrim BT38 8TE
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 March 2007
Date of previous inspection:	29 March 2001

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	34	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	15	-
• funded by Department of Education	15	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	2	-
• with English as an additional language	2	-
• 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%	-

* Special Educational Needs

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	5
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	5
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	1
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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	15
Percentage returned:	66.7%
Number of written comments:	5

ALPHABET PLAYGROUP, GREENISLAND, CO ANTRIM, BT38 8TE (3AB-0353)

1. The playgroup is situated in the Greenisland housing estate; the children come from a wide surrounding area. The centre is accommodated in a local community centre which is shared with other organisations. Since the last inspection, the staff have attended some relevant training courses, the centre has secured funding to develop an outdoor area and two members of staff share the leadership role.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The very positive responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection. The small number of issues raised have been shared with the staff. These included concerns about the lack of an outdoor play area, the level of building maintenance and the requirement for the staff to set out and clear away all equipment on a daily basis.

3. The centre has comprehensive policies and procedures in place for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that all staff show a high level of concern for the children's welfare and implement effectively the child protection practices.

4. The centre demonstrates a commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle among the children. Good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a range of energetic physical activities.

5. **The main strengths within the centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.**

- The centre has an excellent ethos based on good relationships at all levels. The atmosphere is welcoming and relaxed. The staff work diligently to set out a very rich and stimulating learning environment on a daily basis.
- The children are settled and well behaved throughout the session.
- The staff celebrate diversity within the group in a sensitive and thoughtful manner.
- The daily timetable is very well organised to provide a good balance between extended periods of free play and enjoyable and purposeful group activities. The transitions and routines are managed very smoothly and effectively.
- The staff are all caring and supportive and promote a sense of enjoyment and interest. The quality of the staff's interaction to promote language, learning and thinking is very good, and often, excellent. The support given is well matched to the children's stages of development.
- The pre-school programme is broad and balanced and gives very good opportunities for learning across the curriculum. The children are highly motivated and sustain prolonged periods of concentrated and co-operative play. The staff make excellent use of the play opportunities to promote the children's oral language and listening skills, and they develop a very high level of interest in books and early marking among the children. There is very good promotion of a

wide range of early mathematical language and concepts. The wide range of visits and visitors link effectively to the curriculum to enhance further the children's learning experiences.

- There are effective links with the parents. The staff seek and act on the parents' views and they value the contribution they make to the life of the centre.
- The very detailed written planning and assessment methods guide the staff effectively in their day-to-day work and are used to ensure there is a close match between the activities and the support provided and the children's differing needs.
- The staff are aware of some children's specific need for additional support; they liaise closely with parents and other agencies, when required, in order to plan effectively to meet these needs.
- There is a very strong sense of team-work between the effective leadership and all of the staff. They all contribute to the very good quality of the provision.

6. The leaders work well together and demonstrate a strong commitment to the children and the future work of the centre. There is an appropriate development plan which identifies relevant areas for action; the staff have made a very useful start in self-evaluating aspects of their provision. There is clear evidence that there has been continuous and significant improvement in the provision since the last inspection.

7. The quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is excellent. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being very well met. The parents can have confidence in the pre-school centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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