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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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**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

**Anahilt Pre-School Playgroup
Hillsborough**

Inspected: October 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Anahilt Pre-school Playgroup
Address:	29A West Winds Terrace Anahilt HILLSBOROUGH Co Down BT26 6BS
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	22 October 2007
Date of previous inspection:	13 November 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	30	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	25	-
• funded by Department of Education	21	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• 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	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	95%	-

* 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	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	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	N/A	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	25
Percentage returned:	56%
Number of written comments:	4

**ANAHILT PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, HILLSBOROUGH CO DOWN, BT26 6BS
(4AB-0431)**

1. The centre is situated in spacious mobile accommodation. Since the last inspection much has been done to develop the playgroup accommodation. The centre has a new early years specialist (EYS) who took up post in October 2006.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and the comments, included in the returns, have been shared with the staff. A few parents included written comments praising the staff and the work of the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The pre-school centre has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars and has identified appropriately a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing. Among the strengths are the caring ethos and the quality of relationships within the centre; the few areas for improvement identified include the need to: review the anti-bullying policy and procedures and ensure that the procedures for the toileting and changing of the children is written down and shared with the parents.

4. The pre-school staff give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and have effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The centre's positive ethos contributes effectively to the children's development. There is a happy caring and settled atmosphere: relationships between the staff and the children are good. The children are friendly and well-behaved. The playrooms are attractive and are enhanced by the use of posters, photographs and displays of the children's art work.
- There are many instances of purposeful and productive play when the children share the materials agreeably and show consideration to one another. The children make independent choices of activity and many sustain good levels of concentration in their play.
- The daily timetable is well organised and provides a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. During the early part of the session, the valuable period of free play provides the children with good opportunities to explore freely the range of activities on offer and to develop their play. The snack time is organised informally and there are good opportunities for the children to develop independence and acquire early mathematical and conversational skills.

- The range of activities provided offers satisfactory or good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion of the children's language and literacy and early mathematical ideas are particular strengths of the programme.
- There is a strong sense of team-spirit among the hard-working staff; they co-operate effectively in the day-to-day running of the centre. The staff display commitment to the centre and the children.

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

- The staff need to develop further the long-term planning in order to provide a more stimulating and challenging programme that progresses steadily throughout the year.
- The methods of observation and assessment need to be developed further to inform the planning and to meet the needs of all of the children.
- The EYS's work with the centre needs to be more focused and regular.

7. The staff have started to develop some useful methods of self-evaluation. Although this work is at an early stage, some progress has been made in observing the practice in the playroom. The contribution made by the centre's EYS has a few strengths in developing the centre's work. The staff now require more focused and regular support from their EYS in order to meet the specific needs of the staff and the centre and to bring about the necessary improvements identified in this report.

8. The pre-school centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the pre-school centre has the capacity to address. The pre-school centre's progress on the areas for improvement will be followed-up by monitoring visits, conducted by the District Inspector.

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