

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ardstraw Community  
Playgroup, Omagh

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2010

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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>	Ardstraw Community Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	11A Deerpark Road Ardstraw OMAGH Co Tyrone BT78 4LL
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	18 May 2010
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	16 January 2003

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school centre	15	-
in their immediate pre-school year	9	-
funded by Department of Education	9	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	4	-
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	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	94%	-

\* 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	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

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

\*\* 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>
2½ hours	-	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

<b>Number issued to parents:</b>	15
Percentage returned:	86.7%
Number of written comments:	6

## **ARDSTRAW COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, OMAGH, CO TYRONE, BT78 4LL (2BB-0444)**

1. Ardstraw Community Playgroup is accommodated in purpose-built accommodation in the grounds of Ardstraw Primary School. The children come from the surrounding rural area. Since the last inspection, the deputy leader has been appointed to the post of leader and there is a reduction of one staff member on the team as a result of fluctuations in enrolments.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is very good; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The pre-school centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children respond well to the staff's expectations and their behaviour is excellent. They display high levels of interest in the wide range of activities provided in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. The quality of the play is good, their learning is concentrated and as a result, the children appear confident and have developed a range of skills such as investigating and making choices. During the inspection, the children were often observed using appropriate mathematical language in play situations. The children's very good development of early mathematical concepts and language, and their curiosity of their physical environment were particularly evident as they engaged productively in the various activities.

### **PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

4. The learning environment is stimulating and careful consideration is given to the effective use of all the space to create safe and interesting areas of learning. Good use is made of the children's own art work and attractive topical displays to enhance the learning environment.

5. High priority is given to developing the children's language through sustained adult interactions, which successfully build on the children's ideas and meet effectively the children's differing language needs and varying stages of development. During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in valuable discussion about their play and experiences, and participated sensitively in many of the activities to provide role-models and encourage the children to observe, to think, to make choices and to extend their play.

6. The centre's curriculum is broad and balanced and offers excellent opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The pre-school programme promotes effectively the children's all round development. The daily timetable is very well-organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. The children benefit from sustained periods of uninterrupted play. The daily snack, and other necessary routines, are organised very effectively to develop the children's mathematical language, independence, social and conversational skills.

7. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the pre-school centre is outstanding. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a secure, supportive environment which is helping the children to grow in confidence, independence and consideration for others. There are excellent working relationships at all levels.

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

9. The pre-school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, as part of the snack routine the children are encouraged to try a range of 'healthy' foods and they have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

10. The leader, who was previously the deputy leader, is recently promoted to the post. She is an excellent role-model in her work with the children; she is well-organised and is effective in promoting a strong team-spirit among the hard-working staff. All of the staff have a caring approach to the children and are committed to the development of the pre-school centre. Since the last inspection, the staff have attended a range of training and development courses, including for example, a language development programme and autism training; there is evidence that the training is having a positive impact on the overall quality of the centre's provision. The pre-school centre is well-supported by the early years specialist; the staff clearly value this support. The pre-school centre has an appropriate development plan with identified targets for improvement. The staff are developing methods of self-evaluation and there is evidence that the process has led to improvements in the children's experiences provided during outdoor play.

11. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Thirteen of the parents responded to the questionnaire and six made additional written comments; all of the comments were very positive and indicate a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the dedication and care shown to the children by the hard-working, friendly and approachable staff. The responses from the management group were generally positive and the staff questionnaires were wholly positive. A summary of the responses has been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

12. The key strengths in this pre-school centre include:

- the caring and inclusive learning environment;
- the well-behaved children and the outstanding quality of the working relationships between the staff and the children;
- the broad and balanced pre-school curriculum and the children's achievements particularly in mathematical language development and curiosity about the world around them;
- the very good quality of the staff's interaction which effectively promotes safe and concentrated play and learning;
- the well-organised daily timetable and routines which effectively promote the children's independence and learning; and
- the hard-working and skilful staff and the effective leadership which is well-focused on improvements and developments.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is very good. The pre-school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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