



*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

Armoy Cross-Community Playgroup Ballymoney

Inspected: October 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Armoy Cross-Community Playgroup
Address:	Armoy Community Centre 12 Main Street Armoy BALLYMONEY Co Antrim BT53 8RQ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	12 October 2008
Date of previous inspection:	21 November 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	19	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
• 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	83%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	-	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	-	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	-	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
2 ¾ hours	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned:	35.3%
Number of written comments:	4

**ARMOY CROSS-COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, ARMOY, BALLYMONEY,
CO ANTRIM, BT53 8RQ (3BB-0354)**

1. The pre-school centre is situated in the Community Centre in Armoy. The pre-school centre shares the accommodation with other community groups. The children who attend the pre-school centre come from the village of Armoy and the surrounding rural area. Since the last inspection, there have been several staffing changes including the appointment of a new leader. There are currently 19 children attending the pre-school centre.

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. Just over one-third of the parents responded to the questionnaire and some made additional comments. The responses from the parents indicate generally good levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision and they appreciate:

- the approachable, caring and attentive staff, and
- the opportunities for the children to learn to share, relate and co-operate with one another and to learn new things.

A minority of the parents who responded to the questionnaires, are unsure of the procedures that the pre-school centre uses to deal with pastoral care and child protection issues. The responses from the management group and the staff were very positive and supportive of the work of the pre-school centre. All of the responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and were shared with the staff and the management group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is satisfactory. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children.

4. The pre-school centre's arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. In particular, the pre-school centre needs to:

- review the policy for child protection and ensure that the arrangements for child protection are made known directly to the parents;
- develop and implement clear procedures around the intimate care of young children;
- review the behaviour management and anti-bullying policies and procedures;
- implement improved practices for the maintenance of health and hygiene; and
- update the training in child protection to include all of the staff.

5. There are areas for improvement in the pre-school's programme for the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity which require prompt action. In particular the pre-school centre needs to plan more effectively the physical activity sessions.

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

- There are satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. During the inspection, the staff used appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play and promoted an interest in counting, time and money.
- The staff spend sustained periods with groups and individuals promoting the children's language and thinking, and participating effectively in their play.
- The staff worked hard to make imaginative use of the equipment and resources available within the playroom during the inspection. The equipment is arranged into distinct areas of play with the addition of many natural materials.
- The examples of purposeful play where the children displayed sustained interest in the creative area, the greengrocer shop and in the planting activity.
- The developing links established with the two primary schools to which most of the children will transfer and the local SureStart provider.

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

- The staff need to develop their planning in order to demonstrate how the children's learning will develop over time, to ensure that differing needs are met effectively, and to provide evidence of adequate challenge and progression throughout the year.
- The child protection policies and procedures need to be appropriately updated, fully implemented and shared with the parents.
- The staff need to develop their skill in recording and evaluating the children's learning.

8. The contribution made by the pre-school centre's early years specialist (EYS) has a few strengths in developing the pre-school centre's work. The staff require more focused purposeful support from their EYS in order to bring about the necessary improvements.

9. In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management; these areas need to be addressed urgently if the pre-school centre is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

The Inspectorate will undertake a follow-up visit, within six working weeks, to evaluate the actions taken and planned to address the deficiency identified in the pre-school centre's arrangements for child protection.

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