

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Broughshane Centre of Early  
Learning, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2010

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Broughshane Centre of Early Learning
<b>Address:</b>	Community Centre Knockan Road Broughshane BALLYMENA Co Antrim BT42 4JY
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	11 March 2010
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	13 October 2004

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	33	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	2	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
• 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	97%	-

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

<b>Number of: **</b>	
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	-	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	14
Number returned:	64.3%
Number of written comments:	2

**BROUGHSHANE CENTRE OF EARLY LEARNING, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM,  
BT42 4JY (3AB-0142)**

1. Broughshane Centre of Early Learning is accommodated within the Community Centre which is owned and maintained by Ballymena Borough Council. The centre has the use of a playroom, which occasionally has to be cleared for community events. The children also have infrequent access to a large hall for physical play. Since the last inspection, there have been some staffing changes and a change of early years specialist (EYS). The current EYS was appointed in September 2009. The centre has recently accessed funding to develop an outdoor play area.

2. 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. A majority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and two made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were all positive and indicated that the parents regard the pre-school centre highly. The responses from the management committee and the staff questionnaires were very positive. The management committee's response commented on the settled behaviour of the children and the range of activities available for them. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the welfare of the children. The staff are caring and supportive. Relationships at all levels are very good; the children respond well to the staff and their behaviour is good.

4. The pre-school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

5. The pre-school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, a healthy eating policy has been agreed and shared with the parents and the children have access to a healthy snack each day. As a result of deficiencies in the accommodation, there are limited opportunities for energetic physical play.

6. There is a wide range of stages of development within the group of children currently enrolled in the centre. The majority of the children are settled and respond well to the planned programme. A minority of those children who are in their penultimate pre-school year require continuous adult support to settle to their play. During the inspection, there were instances of co-operative play and the children show independence in choosing their play activities. The older children in the group require more encouragement to engage in concentrated, purposeful play. They are beginning to show detail in their drawings and painting and show a good interest in books and stories.

7. Most of the children are confident and articulate and they listen well to the staff. The adult interactions are caring and supportive and they often engage the children in natural conversations about familiar experiences. The staff now need to focus on developing the children's language and thinking skills through more open-ended questioning and the provision of more challenging activities and resources. The staff have identified those children with language difficulties or delay, and good links have been established with local therapists. There is evidence that these children are making progress.

8. Given the deficiencies in the premises, the staff work hard to create a suitable learning environment for the children. The routines are well-managed and the daily session includes lengthy periods of uninterrupted play. The staff should continue to review the presentation of materials and resources to provide the children with greater choice, and to promote further their independence and decision-making skills. There are satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. There is a need to develop further the areas of early mathematics and science, and to provide a progressive programme for the children's physical development.

9. The written planning outlines a range of appropriate monthly themes and topics and the short-term planning highlights some learning potential within the areas of play. The staff need to ensure that there is sufficient progression within the planned activities and greater challenge and extension for the more mature children. The staff are recording some observations of the children's responses to their play but these need to be more systematic and more closely linked to the intended learning within the planning.

10. The leader and the staff team are experienced and very committed to the development of the centre. The contribution made by the EYS to date has strengths, including the advice and guidance given in relation to the identification of children with special educational needs. There is a need for more focused support to enable the staff to evaluate the quality of the provision and to match the planned programme more effectively to the abilities and interests of the children. The staff should work with the EYS to create a development plan for the centre, identifying appropriate areas for ongoing improvement, and addressing the issues raised in this inspection.

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

- the caring and supportive ethos;
- the quality of the relationships and the strategies used to promote positive behaviour;
- the efforts made to create a suitable learning environment;
- the children's enjoyment of, and in interest in, books and stories; and
- the progress made in supporting those children with additional needs.

**12. The priorities identified for further development include the need to:**

- improve the quality of the staff's interactions with the children, to promote more purposeful and challenging play and extend the children's thinking and learning;
- link the assessments of the children's achievements more effectively to the planning to match the children's abilities and interests; and
- develop a programme for physical play.

13. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, 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 centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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