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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

Chirpy Chicks Playgroup
Greyabbey

Inspected: January 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Name of pre-school centre: | Chirpy Chicks Playgroup |
| Address: | The Village Hall Greyabbey NEWTOWNARDS Co Down BT22 2PZ |
| Management Type: | Voluntary |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Date of inspection: | 15 January 2007 |
| Date of previous inspection: | 15 March 2001 |

1. Details of Children

| Total number of children: | am session | pm session |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| • attending the pre-school centre | 12 | - |
| • in their immediate pre-school year | 9 | - |
| • funded by Department of Education | 9 | - |
| • 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 | 0 | - |
| • who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school | 0 | - |
| Attendance: | | |
| • percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year | 98% | - |

* 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 | 4 |
| Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications | 0 | 4 |
| New appointments within previous 12 months | 0 | 0 |

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students | 2 |
| 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 | - | 190 |

4. Parental Questionnaires

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Number issued to parents: | 9 |
| Percentage returned: | 44.4% |
| Number of written comments: | 2 |

**CHIRPY CHICKS PLAYGROUP, GREYABBEY, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN
BT22 2PZ (4AB 0283)**

1. The centre is located in the Village Hall in Greyabbey. The children come mainly from the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the leader was on leave and an acting-leader was in place.

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. In their response, nearly all of the parents were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of the centre's provision.

3. While the staff are aware of appropriate child protection procedures to safeguard the children there is an urgent need for the centre to review and update the current written policy in line with Department of Education (DE) Circulars and guidance.

4. The staff implement good practices to promote healthy eating habits among the children. There is a need to provide a wider range of physical activities and more frequent opportunities for the children to participate in energetic play.

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

- There is a positive ethos based on good relationships at all levels.
- The playroom is attractively presented and there are interesting and varied activities provided throughout the year for the children.
- The staff interact with the children in a caring and supportive manner and the quality of the interaction is consistently of a high standard.
- The staff have developed valuable links with the parents and the local primary school. The parents are kept informed about their children's progress and development, and information is passed to the primary school to which the children will transfer.
- There are satisfactory or good learning opportunities in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum; while the promotion of the children's mathematical awareness and language is a particular strength there is a need to improve the provision for physical play.
- The written planning is developing well and is helpful in guiding the staff in their work with the children.
- The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable provides a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff.
- The staff are hard-working and dedicated and work well as a team.

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

- The staff need to develop further aspects of the assessment methods and build up a more comprehensive evidence bank based on first-hand observations in order to support assessment and learning in all areas.
- The staff need to review and update urgently the child protection policy in line with DE Circulars and guidance.

7. The centre has a useful development plan but has not yet made a start in developing its approaches to self-evaluation.

8. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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