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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*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**

#### **Chuckles Playgroup Newtownards**

**Inspected: January 2009**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Chuckles Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	The Bowling Pavilion Londonderry Park Portaferry Road NEWTOWNARDS Co Down BT23 2AJ
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	13 January 2009
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	1 June 2004

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	19	-
• funded by Department of Education	19	-
• 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	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	87%	-

\* 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	3	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	1
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

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
3 hours	N/A	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	19
Percentage returned:	68.4%
Number of written comments:	7

**CHUCKLES PRE-SCHOOL, PLAYGROUP, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN, BT23 2AJ (4AB-0174)**

1. The pre-school centre is situated in The Bowling Pavilion, Londonderry Park on the Portaferry Road, Newtownards. The children come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection there have been several changes in staffing, a new leader and two new assistants have been employed.

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. A majority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and seven made additional comments. The responses from the parents indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the provision and they appreciate:

- the extremely hard-working, friendly caring and dedicated staff.

The responses from the management group and the staff were very positive, and supportive of the work of the 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 very good. The staff work well as a team and demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The relationships at all levels are very good and there are close links with the parents, local schools and appropriate support agencies.

4. The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments, but the following minor areas need to be addressed:

- to update the training in child protection to include all staff; and
- to ensure that there are sufficient committee members trained in child protection to sit on recruitment or selection panels.

5. The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The centre has a very positive ethos. There is a happy, settled atmosphere and the children are very well behaved. Working relationships among the staff, the children and the parents are excellent. The playroom is thoughtfully arranged with distinct areas for aspects of play. The range of activities is inviting, stimulating and challenging for young children and is often enhanced with interesting materials, displays of the children's art work and books.

- The thoughtful organisation of the daily routines ensures that all time is used effectively to promote learning and allows the day to flow smoothly and create long periods of uninterrupted play.
- The staff foster a sense of enjoyment and have created a warm, supportive environment in which the children grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are successful in encouraging most of the children to play in a settled manner; the quality of their interaction is consistently of a very high standard.
- The leader is a good role-model in her work with the children. She provides effective leadership for the hard-working and committed staff who work very well as a team.
- The centre's programme is broad and balanced and offers very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children are well-motivated to learn, sustain concentration and perseverance and confidently make choices. Particular strengths of the centre's programme include the attention given to the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, early mathematical awareness and language development.
- The staff make very good efforts to identify, support and address the difficulties experienced by some children with their learning. The staff are sensitive to the children's needs whilst encouraging as much integration and independence as possible; there is effective liaison with the parents and other professionals.

7. The staff have made a useful start to developing some appropriate methods of evaluating the quality of their work. They observe the practice within the playroom and evaluate the quality of the provision made for the children. As the staff continue to develop this aspect of their work they need to select carefully the area under focus. They recognise the need to continue to develop this aspect of their work.

8. The early years specialist has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this centre. The support provided through the cluster support and providing ideas and suggestions help the staff improve aspects of their work.

9. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is very good. The pre-school centre 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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