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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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Discovering Kids Playgroup The Loup, Magherafelt

Inspected: November 2009

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Discovering Kids Playgroup (The Loup)
Address:	100 Loup Road Moneymore MAGHERAFELT Co Londonderry BT45 7ST
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	5 November 2009
Date of previous inspection:	30 May 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	20	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	20	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	20	-
• 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	1	-
• 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	85%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
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
3 hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	20
Percentage returned:	80%
Number of written comments:	4

DISCOVERING KIDS PLAYGROUP, THE LOUP, MAGHERAFELT, CO LONDONDERRY, BT45 7ST (5AB-0417)

1. Discovering Kids Playgroup is located in the old school in the centre of the Loup village. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes including a new leader.

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. Most of the parents responded to the questionnaire and four made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were wholly positive and indicated that the parents regard the pre-school centre highly. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were very positive. The management group commented on the quality of the leadership, the team approach to the work of the playgroup and the strong sense of community spirit. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The staff work well together as a team and demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all of the children. The working relationships at all levels are excellent and there are very effective links with the parents and the appropriate support agencies.

4. The playgroup has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect fully the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

5. The playgroup gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; a healthy snack is provided daily and there are regular opportunities for energetic play in the thoughtfully designed outdoor area. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- There is a very happy, caring atmosphere throughout the playgroup. Working relationships at all levels are excellent. The children are very well settled; they make full use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment, respond positively to the staff's high expectations and demonstrate a good level of independence and exemplary behaviour.
- The staff have outlined detailed and comprehensive planning for the educational programme which is effective in guiding them in their work with the children.
- Very effective use is made of all of the time available to promote the children's learning; the daily sessions and routines are very well organised with a good balance between free play and adult directed sessions. The vast majority of the children spend sustained periods at self-chosen activities and engage in purposeful and productive play.
- There are very good, and at times excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; the staff provide a wide range of challenging and interesting activities for the children and their observations and assessments are used effectively to ensure that the learning activities are appropriately matched to the children's stage of development.

- The staff interact very effectively with the children to extend their thinking and to meet their individual needs.
- The playgroup is very well managed. The leader is an excellent role-model in her own work with the children; she sets high standards in her work and is very effectively supported by the dedicated and hard-working team.

7. The playgroup has a comprehensive development plan with appropriate targets for improvement. There is culture of self-evaluation and very good evidence that this has led to improvements in the children's learning experiences. The early years specialist provides well focused support that matches effectively the needs of the playgroup.

8. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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