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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

**Forkhill Pre-School Playgroup
Newry**

Inspected: February 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Forkhill Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	Community Centre Bog Road Forkhill NEWRY Co Down BT35 9SZ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	20 February 2008
Date of previous inspection:	19 November 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	23	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	23	-
• 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	91%	-

* 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	4	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: **	
Students	1
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:	23
Percentage returned:	78.26%
Number of written comments:	15

**FORKHILL PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 9SZ
(5AB-0401)**

1. The centre is situated in the village of Forkhill, approximately 9 miles from the City of Newry. Since the last inspection in 2002, the leader has continued in post with the support of some new members of staff.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. There was a very high level of praise and satisfaction for the work of the staff by the parents and support for the playgroup in the local area. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the pre-school centre has important strengths. The pre-school centre has policies and procedures for child protection that address most aspects of the Department of Education Circulars and guidance. Among the strengths are:

- the very caring and supportive atmosphere and the excellent relationships between the staff and the children;
- the contribution made by the staff to the children's well-being and their learning experiences;
- the effective ways of communicating with parents and the management group; and
- the effective communication and working alongside other agencies.

The areas for improvement identified include the need to:

- consult further with the staff, children and parents when revising policies;
- review the anti-bullying policy and procedures;
- develop further the risk assessments procedures; and
- monitor and evaluate further the effectiveness of the pastoral care policies in the playroom.

The inspection evidence indicates that the current and draft policies and procedures are implemented consistently by the staff.

4. The pre-school 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.

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

- The staff make the best possible use of all the centre's facilities to provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment. They display the children's art work and celebrate their achievements. The quality of the relationships between the staff and the children are excellent.
- There are purposeful and productive educational links with the local primary school and cluster of pre-school centres. The staff has established good communication and links with the parents, provide them with information on the pre-school curriculum and report to them on the children's progress and development.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a high quality and the children are receptive to the development of their ideas; as a result they sustain concentration and motivation during play.
- There are very good opportunities for the children to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; the opportunities to develop mathematical language and to investigate, experiment and explore are key strengths of the provision.
- The good quality of the planning to meet the children's individual needs and to support their learning is clearly reflected in their enjoyment of the activities. They display high levels of self-esteem.
- The quality of the leadership and management is good. The staff are all hard-working and supportive in meeting the needs of the children. The leader has a clear vision for good quality pre-school education and continues to strive to improve the quality of the accommodation for the pre-school centre. She is an enthusiastic role-model and ensures through a culture of team-work to involve staff, parents and the wider community in supporting the further developments of the playgroup.

6. The staff has started to implement some useful methods of self-evaluation. They have begun to take an overview of the quality of the provision. The contribution made by the centre's early years specialist (EYS) has some strengths, including the beginning made at developing self-evaluation methods. However, a few important areas of the centre's work, including the further development of the child protection policies and procedures have been identified for improvement. It will be important that staff work closely with the EYS in order to address these key areas for improvement.

7. The pre-school centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the pre-school centre has the capacity to address.

The pre-school centre's progress on the areas for improvement will be followed-up by monitoring visits, conducted by the District Inspector.

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