

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kingdom Playgroup, Kilkeel

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Kingdom Playgroup
Address:	10 Dunnaval Road KILKEEL Co Down BT34 4JT
Management Type:	Voluntary
Date of inspection:	24 January 2013
Date of previous inspection:	October 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	20	-
in their immediate pre-school year	20	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	20	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs		-
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%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	

Number of: ***	
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:	20
Percentage returned	74%
Number of written comments:	8

1. Introduction

The Kingdom playgroup is situated in a rural location on the outskirts of Killeel. It is accommodated in a purpose-built mobile unit within the grounds of the local GAA football club. At the time of the inspection all of the children attending were in their immediate pre-school year and came from a wide surrounding area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations, discussions with the staff and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school setting.

The views of the parents and staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The questionnaires returned from parents, staff and management were highly affirmative of the work of the leader and staff team and the quality of the provision being provided. Their written comments indicated an appreciation of the caring and highly professional approach taken by the staff, the very good educational experiences being provided, the progress made by the children and the stimulating learning environment.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school setting is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Good Satisfactory Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are developing very good levels of independence as they self-manage their daily routines and select and use equipment with confidence. They are interested and motivated in their learning and most spend sustained periods exploring and completing activities. A small number of children still require some adult support to share equipment and cooperate fully; this is in part reflective of the high number of younger children attending the playgroup with birthdays which are later in the school year.

- The children enjoy making simple structures using the wide range of construction and junk materials available; they are interested in exploring and investigating the properties of sand, water and the real vegetables in the home role play area. The children make good use of the creative area to express their own ideas as they paint, draw and make models. A few children are beginning to make simple representations of people and objects.
- The children show an interest in print and mark making and enjoy both informal and larger group stories, rhymes and songs. While a majority of the children can collaborate with each other during play, a significant minority remain at an earlier stage of development and engage in more solitary or parallel play. The language and communication skills and the imaginary play of this group of children are less well developed.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

- The playroom provides an excellent learning environment for the children. It is very well laid out into richly resourced and attractive areas with a wide range of suitable activities. The staff have made good progress in developing the resources for the adjoining outdoor area; they should make better use of this area on a more regular basis.
- The staff are all caring and supportive in their approaches with the children. They value their ideas and, in a majority of the practice observed, extended the children's language, thinking and learning effectively. The staff team need to be more consistent in exploiting the full learning potential of all activities, in particular, the modelling of key vocabulary, use of mathematical language, emergent writing and role play. The planning and assessment information should be developed further to inform these improvements.
- The daily timetable provides for periods of extended play, a well managed snack routine, energetic play and story time. Many of the children would benefit from the opportunity to take part in smaller group sessions.
- There are very good links with the parents who are kept well informed and are encouraged to be involved in the playgroup and in their children's learning. The staff have established very useful working links with a speech and language therapist and very good pastoral links with a local primary school.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of healthy snacks and regular energetic activities in the adjoining hall.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There are excellent working relationships at all levels, a strong commitment to the welfare of the children, and a caring and inclusive ethos in the playgroup.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The leader is enthusiastic, very well organised and promotes a strong sense of team work among her dedicated staff, parents and management. She has worked hard to secure new premises, high quality resources and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement.
- While the recently appointed early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) has provided some useful advice and guidance, the overall quality of the support and training for staff has been inadequate in recent years. This has had a negative impact on the rate and quality of continuous improvement within the playgroup.
- The development plan and associated action plans are at an early stage of development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's arrangements for safeguarding children are comprehensive. The arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school setting is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The key areas for improvement are the need to:

- review the organisation of the daily timetable, use of the hall and outdoor area to meet more fully the needs of all of the children; and
- improve the consistency in the quality of the staff's interactions to develop the children's language and learning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

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