



*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

**Leitrim Community Playgroup
Castlewellan**

Inspected: October 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Leitrim Community Playgroup
Address:	9 Backaderry Road Leitrim CASTLEWELLAN Co Down BT31 9SL
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 October 2008
Date of previous inspection:	11 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	24	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	4	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
• 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	0	4
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	3

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
2¾ hours	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	79%
Number of written comments:	11

**LEITRIM COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, CASTLEWELLAN, CO DOWN, BT31 9SL
(5AB-0420)**

1. The purpose-built centre is situated on the Backaderry Road in Leitrim. Most of the children who attend the pre-school centre come from the village of Leitrim and the surrounding rural area. Since the last inspection, there have been several staffing changes, including the appointment of a new leader and two assistants. There are currently 24 children attending the centre.

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. Approximately 79% of the parents responded to the questionnaire of which eleven contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires support strongly the work of the centre, in particular the dedicated and caring staff and the high regard in which the centre is held by the local community. The staff and management group commented positively on the very good working relationships at all levels in the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The very positive and inclusive ethos helps to promote the children's confidence and self-esteem.

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

5. The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The learning environment is bright and well-organised, with attractive and colourful displays that celebrate the children's work.
- The daily timetable is carefully organised to provide a good balance of free play and adult-led activities. The routines are unobtrusive and used effectively to provide choice and promote the children's independence.
- The staff are skilful in promoting the children's thinking skills and language development through the play activities and group sessions.
- There are very good opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Particular strengths of the programme are the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, language, early mathematical concepts and awareness of the world around them.
- The planning and assessment methods are effective. The information from the observation of the children's interaction is used well, and increasingly, to plan activities to meet the children's individual interests and needs.

- The centre has useful links with the local primary schools. There is very good communication with the parents. An appropriate range of strategies is used to inform the parents about their children's progress and the work of the centre. The management committee and parents contribute very effectively to the life and work of the centre.

7. The leader of the centre is an outstanding practitioner and is highly committed to providing quality pre-school education for the children and families of the community. There is a strong sense of collegiality among the new staff team; the developing culture of reflection and review is evident within their practice. This is exemplified by the appropriate development plan and, in particular, the associated action plan that identifies the further improvement in the outdoor play provision.

8. The early years specialist has made an excellent contribution to the overall development of the centre's provision. The support provided is well focused and matches effectively the needs of the centre.

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