



*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

Little Acorns Playgroup Craigavon

Inspected: October 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Acorns Playgroup
Address:	20 Derrymore Road Gawleys Gate CRAIGAVON Co Armagh BT67 0BW
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	17 October 2007
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	19	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
• funded by Department of Education	14	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	3	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	1	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	91%	-

* Special Educational Needs

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year 2

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
3 hours	N/A	189

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	19
Percentage returned:	78.9%
Number of written comments:	5

**LITTLE ACORNS PLAYGROUP, CRAIGAVON, CO ARMAGH, BT67 0BW
(5AB-0542)**

1. The centre is located in a mobile in the grounds of St Mary's Primary School. The children come mainly from the immediate and surrounding area.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection. In their responses, nearly all of the parents were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of the centre's provision. Some of the parents added written comments which highlighted the positive ethos of the centre and the hard work of the staff.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the centre is very good. The centre has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars.

4. The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has strengths, with a developing commitment to encourage the children to eat healthily and be physically active.

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

- The positive ethos helps to promote a settled, caring atmosphere and very good relationships at all levels. The staff make very good use of the available space and create an attractive and stimulating learning environment which is enhanced by examples of the children's art work.
- There are good opportunities for learning in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum. There are particular strengths in the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, raising mathematical awareness and the attention given to developing the children's creative ideas.
- The staff interact with the children in a supportive manner and the quality of the interaction is consistently of a high standard.
- The good start made to planning a varied and interesting programme and the detailed methods of assessment that take account of the children's responses to the play activities and help to ensure the needs of all the children are well met.
- The centre has established very good links with the parents and the neighbouring primary school.
- The leader is dedicated and provides effective leadership for the hard-working staff who work very well as a team.

6. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.

- The staff need to develop aspects of the physical play programme in order to ensure more challenge and progression in the activities throughout the year.
- The written planning needs to identify more clearly the learning to be promoted in the planned activities.

7. The staff implement a useful method of self-evaluation. Appropriate areas have been identified for development. Progress has been made in developing the links with the parents, and helping to ensure a smooth transition for the children between home and the centre. The early years specialist has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this pre-school centre. The support provided is well focused.

8. 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.

APPENDIX

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- At the time of the inspection, it was noted that the entrance door to the main primary school building, which is used by the playgroup to access the toilet area, was not always secured.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2007

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.