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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**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  
Killyman, Dungannon**

**Inspected: February 2008**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name of pre-school centre:</b> | Little Acorns Playgroup   |
| <b>Address:</b>                   | c/o Laghey Primary School<br>Tamnamore Road<br>Killyman<br>DUNGANNON<br>Co Tyrone<br>BT71 6RJ |
| <b>Management Type:</b>           | Voluntary   |

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Date of inspection:</b>          | 18 February 2008 |
| <b>Date of previous inspection:</b> | 17 April 2002    |

### 1. Details of Children

| <b>Total number of children:</b>  | <b>am session</b> | <b>pm session</b> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| • 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  | 1                 | -                 |
| • 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                      | 1                 | -                 |
| <b>Attendance:</b>  |                   | -                 |
| • percentage attendance* of funded children for the previous school year                                      | 88%               | -                 |

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

### 2. Details of Staff

| <b>Number of:</b>                                 | <b>Full-time</b> | <b>Part-time</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Staff, including leader                           | 3                | 1                |
| Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications | 2                | 1                |
| New appointments within previous 12 months        | 3                | 0                |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Number of: **</b> |   |
| Students             | 0 |
| Trainees             | 2 |

\*\* Total placements since September of current year

### 3. Details of Sessions

| <b>Duration of morning session</b> | <b>Duration of afternoon session</b> | <b>Number of days open in previous year</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3 hours                            | -                                    | 187   |

### 4. Parental Questionnaires

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Number issued to parents:   | 20  |
| Percentage returned:        | 75% |
| Number of written comments: | 8   |

**LITTLE ACORNS PLAYGROUP, KILLYMAN, DUNGANNON, CO TYRONE, BT71 6RJ (5BB-0237)**

1. The centre is situated in mobile accommodation in the grounds of Laghey Primary School. The children and staff have access to many of the resources in the primary school, including the use of the school hall, the library and the outdoor sports pitch. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. A new leader and two new assistants were appointed and took up post in September 2007.

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. Those who responded expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection is very good. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The 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 centre has a very positive ethos with a clear sense of purpose, and a strong community spirit. Relationships at all levels are excellent. The staff are caring and supportive and they have created an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They respond well to the adults' expectations and their behaviour is very good.
- The daily timetable is carefully organised to provide a good balance of free play and adult-led activities. Routines are unobtrusive and used effectively to provide choice and promote the children's independence.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is very good; through skilful questioning and natural conversations, they stimulate and sustain the children's interest and promote co-operative and purposeful play.
- There are good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Early mathematical ideas are introduced very naturally through the play activities and there is a good emphasis on promoting the children's physical development and their understanding of the world around them.
- The written planning is detailed and provides clear guidance for the staff in their work with the children.

- The support provided for particular children with special educational needs is excellent. Effective links have been established with other health professionals and with the special educational needs co-ordinator in one of the local primary schools. Well-focused educational plans are in place and there is evidence that the children are making significant progress in their learning and development.

6. The leader manages the centre very effectively; she has a clear vision for its future development. The staff are enthusiastic and committed, and they work very well as a team. They meet regularly to plan and evaluate the programme and they are using the process of self-evaluation very well to identify appropriate areas for review and improvement. A sound development plan has been drafted to help take forward these priorities. The contribution made by the centre's early years specialist (EYS) has important strengths, including the recent training provided in relation to special educational needs. The staff, with focused support from the centre's EYS, are well placed to continue the developmental work that has been planned.

7. The quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS**

- One of the external doors in the centre is in a poor state of repair.
- The handle and locking mechanism on the door which the children and parents use to access the playroom is also in need of repair.

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