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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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 Doves Playgroup
Newtownards**

Inspected: January 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Doves Playgroup
Address:	Childcare Centre Dakota Avenue NEWTOWNARDS Co Down BT23 4QX
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	16 January 2008
Date of previous inspection:	27 November 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	18	16
• in their immediate pre-school year	18	0
• funded by Department of Education	18	0
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	6	0
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	4	3
• with English as an additional language	0	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	98%	98%

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	5
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	2
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	2 hours	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned:	66.7%
Number of written comments:	7

**LITTLE DOVES PLAYGROUP, NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN BT23 4QX
(4AB-0439)**

1. The centre is situated in the West Winds Estate, Newtownards. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has moved into a purpose-built mobile and a new member of staff has been appointed. The children come mainly from the 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. All of those who responded were very satisfied with all aspects of the centre's work. Many of the parents included written comments praising the work of the staff.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the pre-school centre is very good. The centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection that comply with the Department of Education Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The staff in the pre-school give very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, and have effective policies and programmes in place which 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, welcoming ethos characterised by the good working relationships at all levels. The children are very well settled and their behaviour is very good; they co-operate well with one another and demonstrate good levels of concentration in their chosen activities.
- The staff have developed very good communication and relationships with the parents and the local community.
- The centre's programme provides very good opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school programme. In particular, the programme promotes effectively the children's personal, social, emotional and language development.
- During the inspection, there were many examples of effective interaction between the staff and the children that helped to extend the children's thinking and learning. The staff spend sustained periods working alongside the children and generate a real sense of fun and enjoyment.
- The staff provide very good support for those children identified as having special educational needs. The children are monitored carefully and detailed records are kept of their responses to the activities and of the progress they are making. The staff have established excellent links with other professional agencies; they work together to provide excellent support for the children and their families.

- Since the last inspection, the leader, with the support of the staff, the management committee and the wider community, has brought about many improvements in the work of the centre; she is enthusiastic, gives effective leadership and demonstrates a commitment to developing the work of the centre. There is a strong sense of team-spirit among the hard-working and dedicated staff, who all contribute to the good quality of the provision.

6. The staff have made good progress in implementing some useful methods of self-evaluation. Progress has been made in reviewing aspects of the centre's provision. The early years specialist has made a good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this pre-school centre.

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 can have confidence in the pre-school centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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