

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Friends Playgroup,
Banbridge

Report of an Inspection
in March 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Friends Playgroup
Address:	Huntley Road BANBRIDGE Co Down BT32 3UA
Management Type:	Private

Date of inspection:	10 March 2010
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	18	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	18	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• 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	95.5%	-

* 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	2	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:	18
Percentage returned:	44.4%
Number of written comments:	4

LITTLE FRIENDS PLAYGROUP, BANBRIDGE, CO DOWN, BT32 3UA (5CA-0559)

1. Little Friends Playgroup is located in Little Friends Day Nursery in Huntley Road, Banbridge.
2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the management committee and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The responses from the questionnaires were generally very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.
3. The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is very good.
4. The playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments but the following area needs to be addressed:
 - the 'Intimate Care' policy needs to outline clearly the procedures to guide the staff in their work with the children.
5. The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; consideration should be given to incorporating fruit into the daily snack routine.
6. The children are friendly and well behaved; their play is settled and many show good concentration in their activities and engage in purposeful and productive play. Most of the children are articulate and talk freely about their work and experiences and contribute well in group discussions. They show a natural curiosity as they explore the materials and activities on offer and are keen to get involved in adult-led activities. The staff make good efforts to meet the individual needs of the children and seek appropriate help and support to overcome any difficulties the children may experience.
7. The staff place much emphasis on promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development, their creative development and their language and communication skills. They have worked hard to create a language rich environment that is enhanced with attractive and interesting topical displays, photographs and samples of the children's art work. All of the staff are patient and supportive, and clearly enjoy participating with the children in their play. During the inspection, there were many examples when the staff provided useful ideas to extend the children's thinking and learning. The children display a keen interest in books and stories; they listen attentively during the group story session and recite rhymes and songs enthusiastically.
8. There is an adequate range of good quality resources to support the children in their play. The parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's education by contributing natural and authentic items to enhance areas of play such as the 'hospital', the craft area and topical displays. The daily timetable is well-organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff.
9. The staff have made a good start in planning a broad pre-school programme. Aspects of the weekly planning need to be reviewed in order to identify more clearly the variety and challenge in the planned activities and the subsequent learning to be promoted. The staff know the children very well and operate a key worker system to assist them in the monitoring of their progress and development. There is evidence of a link between the observations of the children's responses to play and the planning of the programme. The staff have regular opportunities throughout the year to engage with nearly all of the parents and to share information relating to the children's progress.

10. The leader is a good role-model for the staff and demonstrates a professional approach to her work. She promotes a team-spirit among the hard-working staff, and all show enthusiasm and commitment to the welfare of the children and the work of the playgroup. A development plan has been drawn up to support the future development of the playgroup. In the short period that the early years specialist has worked with the staff, she has provided appropriate support and guidance which is valued by the staff.

11. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos in the centre;
- the well-settled children and their positive attitude to learning;
- the very good opportunities for learning in nearly all areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- the hard-working and committed staff.

12. The priorities identified for further development include the need to:

- review aspects of the weekly planning in order to identify more clearly the variety and challenge in the planned activities and the subsequent learning to be promoted.

13. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational 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.

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