



*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 Sunbeams Playgroup Saintfield

Inspected: May 2009

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Little Sunbeams Playgroup
Address:	27 Old Grand Jury Road SAINTFIELD Co Down BT24 7JD
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	5 May 2009
Date of previous inspection:	2 April 2003

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	31	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
• 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	0	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	2	-
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	3	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	1
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:	30
Percentage returned:	46.7%
Number of written comments:	5

**LITTLE SUNBEAMS PLAYGROUP, SAINTFIELD, CO DOWN, BT24 7JD
(4BB-0470)**

1. The pre-school centre is situated in the grounds of St Mary's Primary School, Saintfield. Currently the centre has an acting leader and since the last inspection there have been several other staffing changes. There are currently 31 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. No responses were received from the management group or the staff. A significant minority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and five made additional written comments. All of the comments made by the parents have been shared with the staff and the management group. The responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision and the vast majority of them appreciate:

- the caring and attentive staff; and
- the warm friendly atmosphere in the centre.

The responses from the parents have been taken into account as part of the inspection and were shared with the staff and management group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The new staff are developing a team approach to their work and demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The working relationships between the staff and the children are very good.

4. The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following minor areas need to be addressed:

- to update the training in child protection to include the new members of staff;
- to ensure that the staff develop a code of conduct for addressing the children's intimate care; and
- to ensure that the child protection policy is ratified by the management group.

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 friendly, caring ethos promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and good behaviour.
- The staff make good use of the children's art work and the space available to create an attractive learning environment for the children.

- The lengthy period of free play allows the children to explore the range of activities on offer and to participate in concentrated play.
- The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and the development of their language and creative skills are particular strengths of the programme.
- Good progress has been made in developing an appropriate method of observing the children's response to play.
- The acting leader has worked hard in promoting a team-spirit among the hard-working staff.

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

- The staff need to develop the planning to ensure the learning potential of all the activities is exploited more fully and the experiences provided for the children progress steadily over the two years that children attend the centre.
- The staff need to ensure that the quality of their interactions with the children is more consistently of a good standard and that it promotes learning more effectively.

8. The staff have not yet begun to develop methods of self-evaluation. The centre's early years specialist has made a good contribution to supporting the new staff in the development of aspects of the provision in this pre-school centre.

9. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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