

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Villagers Playgroup,
Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in March 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Little Villagers Playgroup
Address:	Mossfield Playing Fields Springhill Road Glenanne ARMAGH BT60 2LF
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 March 2013
Date of previous inspection:	December 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	29	-
in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	2	-
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	4	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	94%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	

Number of: ***	
Students	1
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	-	191

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned	68%
Number of written comments:	4

1. Introduction

Little Villagers Playgroup is located beside the Mossfield Playing Fields in the village of Glennan, Co Armagh. Since the last inspection in 2005, there have been staffing changes including the appointment of a new leader.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from class observations, discussions with the staff and from the scrutiny of a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and the management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Sixteen questionnaires were issued to the parents; eleven were returned and four included written comments. Almost all of the staff and management group returned the questionnaires. All of the questionnaires and written comments expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work. The parents praised the commitment of the staff to the care and well-being of the children and commented on the high regard in which the playgroup is held.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Very Good Very Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- The children are happy, very well settled, and produce work of a high standard. They spend lengthy periods at their chosen activities and engage in purposeful and productive play. Their language is developing well and they can talk about their work, experiences and interests.
- Very good opportunities are provided to develop the children's physical skills and as a result almost all of the children display good hand-eye co-ordination, good manipulative skills and they can handle larger apparatus with confidence.
- Many of the children make detailed representational drawings and paintings of the world around them and these are displayed attractively around the playgroup.

- The children are encouraged to be independent and are developing good self-help skills. They can attend to their own needs during the snack routine, access materials and resources freely to enhance their play and help to tidy up during transition periods.
- The children engage readily with the staff and approach them for guidance and support when required.

5. **Provision for learning**

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- There is a friendly, caring ethos in the playgroup based on good relationships at all levels.
- All aspects of the pre-school curriculum are thoughtfully planned and appropriately resourced to ensure variety, progression and challenge in the children's learning throughout the year. Themes and topics are used well to enhance the provision and the staff are skilful in ensuring that all opportunities that arise are used to promote language and learning.
- The quality of the interaction between all of the staff and the children is consistently of a very high standard. The staff engage purposefully with the children and build on the children's own ideas and interests by linking the learning effectively to real life contexts and in particular to the personal backgrounds of the children.
- The daily timetable is well organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. Transitions between activities are smooth and the children are given sufficient time to complete a task before moving on to the next stage in the programme.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a secure, supportive environment that helps the children to grow in confidence and to develop their consideration for the needs and wishes of others.
- The written planning is comprehensive and outlines clearly the learning inherent in the activities. The staff use the planning to guide them in their work with the children and evaluate it on a regular basis to make necessary changes.
- The staff are appropriately working on strengthening the link between the observations of the children and the planning of the programme. Currently the action to promote improvement for individual children is too narrowly focused on outlining lists of additional resources. More emphasis needs to be put on the rationale behind this provision.
- At the time of the inspection there were no children in the playgroup identified with special educational needs.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good

- The leader is a very good role model for her staff and promotes a team approach to the work of the playgroup. All of the staff are hard-working and committed to the care and well-being of the children and contribute effectively to the high quality of the provision.
- There is a reflective approach to the work of the playgroup and the development plan outlines appropriate areas for further development and improvement in the provision.
- The children transfer to a wide number of primary schools and the staff have worked hard to build relationships with some of the schools.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation has worked with the staff for a number of years and both parties report a very good working relationship. The EYS provides appropriate support and guidance and has assisted the staff well in bringing about improvements in the provision.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following minor areas need to be addressed. There is a need to ensure:
 - a deputy designated person for safeguarding is appointed and made known to the parents; and
 - there are appropriate systems in place for recording matters relating to safeguarding.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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