

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Loughgall Playgroup,
Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013



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

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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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:	Loughgall Playgroup
Address:	Orange hall Main Street Loughgall ARMAGH BT61 8HZ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	8 January 2013
Date of previous inspection:	2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	16	
in their immediate pre-school year	13	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	13	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		
with a statement of special educational needs	*	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs		
with English as an additional language		
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	*	
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	93%	

* 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	2	0

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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	15
Percentage returned	75%
Number of written comments:	6

1. Introduction

Loughgall Playgroup is currently accommodated in the Orange Hall within the village of Loughgall. The playgroup is in the final stages of planning its relocation to a mobile classroom beside the local primary school. At the time of the inspection almost all of the children attending were in their immediate pre-school year; they come mainly from the immediate local area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations, discussions with the staff and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school setting.

The views of the parents, staff and the management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The questionnaires returned from parents, staff and the management were very positive about all aspects of the provision. The additional written comments indicated a high level of satisfaction with the organisation of the playgroup, the enjoyable and interesting learning experiences and the caring and approachable staff.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school setting is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They can concentrate and persevere at activities to complete tasks. Most of the children make independent choices and self manage their own personal care and snack routine.
- Most of the children communicate confidently with each other and the staff. They show an interest in print, books and stories; they join in rhymes and songs enthusiastically during group sessions. The children's imaginative and collaborative play is well developed as they take on roles both indoors and outdoors. The children use a range of art materials to explore colour and pattern and a few are beginning to paint and draw simple representations of people and objects.

- The children explore with interest the wide range of natural and authentic items which are incorporated around the playroom. The children's records indicate that many of the children can sort, count and recognise basic colours and shape. The staff now need to model and encourage more consistently the use of appropriate mathematical language.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The playroom is attractively presented into richly resourced areas of play. Due to the shared nature of the current accommodation, the staff have, at times, to clear the equipment and reset the activities each day.
- The staff engage with the children in a warm, caring and supportive manner throughout the session; they listen to their ideas and value their contributions. During the inspection, the quality of the staff interaction to promote learning ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the best practice, the staff built consistently on the children's own ideas and promoted very effectively their language, thinking and learning.
- The planning provides a useful overview and ensures a broad and balanced pre-school programme which incorporates a wide range of interesting experiences for the children. The weekly planning needs to match more closely the learning intentions with specific activities in order to guide the staff in their interactions with the children. In addition, the longer term planning should be developed to provide suitable guidance on appropriate challenge and progression in all areas of learning across each year.
- The staff know the children well and have identified their particular needs. They record observations of the children's responses and report their progress to the parents. The staff have identified the need for ongoing development a more systematic approach to gathering and recording information and the better use of this information to provide activities which meet the individual needs and interests of the children.
- There are very good links with the parents; they are kept informed about the work of the playgroup, their views are sought and they are encouraged to contribute their skills. Good links are being developed with local primary schools to which many of the children will transfer.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through a healthy fruit break and regular opportunities for outdoor play.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. This is evident through the inclusive ethos and the excellent working relationships among the staff and the children.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The leader of the playgroup is well motivated, enthusiastic and reflective in her work. She fosters a sense of teamwork among the staff, parents and management group. There is evidence of a strong commitment to the continual development and improvement of the playgroup's provision.
- The early years specialist support (EYS) provided through the Early Years Organisation (EYO) is of satisfactory quality. While the EYS has provided useful training and advice, the playgroup staff would benefit from more specific feedback and guidance on aspects of their work including the development of the planning and observations.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, this playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The key areas for improvement are the need to develop:

- a more systematic approach to tracking the children's progress and the use this information to meet more effectively the needs of individual children ; and
- the planning to guide more effectively the adults' interactions with the children and to ensure sufficient challenge and progression in all aspects of the children's learning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroups progress on the areas for improvement.

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