

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Loughshore Playgroup,
Dungannon

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012

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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:	Loughshore Playgroup
Address:	84 Maghery Road DUNGANNON Co Tyrone BT71 6PA
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	21 November 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	11	-
in their immediate pre-school year	11	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	11	-
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	3	-
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	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	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	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	-	189

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	11
Percentage returned	54.5%
Number of written comments:	3

1. Introduction

Loughshore Playgroup opened in September, 2010 and is situated in a spare classroom at St Mary's Primary School, Maghery on the outskirts of Dungannon. The leader has been in post since the playgroup opened; the deputy leader is new and covering a staff absence due to maternity leave.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Eleven questionnaires were issued to the parents and six were returned with three written comments. All of the staff and members of the management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the playgroup.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good; the playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area for improvement.

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-behaved and quickly settle to play when they arrive in the playgroup. Throughout the session, their levels of concentration are variable; these range from interest levels that are high during role play activities and shorter during exploration and experimentation activities. A majority of the children are aware of print and a few are attempting to form letters to represent their names; most are aware of early mathematical concepts.
- During the inspection, the children co-operated well with one another and with the adults; some of them are developing firm friendships. They are at ease with the staff and turn readily to them for support. Most of the children are beginning to take good care of the materials and to tidy-up after their play at transition times.

- The children respond well to the expectations of the adults and show a readiness to learn.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. The positive relationships at all levels foster an inclusive and supportive family ethos throughout the playgroup. The staff are very caring, listen to the children and offer choice to them within play activities.
- During the inspection, there were many instances of effective interaction by the staff with the children when they were able to sustain the children's involvement in role play and other activities for lengthy periods. On other occasions, the staff missed learning opportunities to enhance early literacy skills by reading stories to the children and encouraging the use of books during play activities.
- Since the opening of the playgroup, the staff have worked hard to create a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children. The children's work is celebrated and presented attractively in the playroom; however, the children need display boards at their eye-level and storage which is within their reach.
- An effective start has been made to developing a systematic approach to recording the children's progress. The staff will require specific support from their early years specialist (EYS) to develop further their understanding of the links between planning, assessment and learning in order to utilise the potential of the planned activities and the interests of the children.
- The parents are kept informed about the children's progress and encouraged to be involved in the development of the provision.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and regular physical activity. The snack is generally well-used to promote the children's independence and development and a few more opportunities can be developed further to promote learning. Currently, the range of experiences in outdoor learning, including energetic physical activity, are underdeveloped and is appropriately identified as an area for improvement by the staff and the management group.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The staff are developing well as a team with a clear focus on planning an effective pre-school programme to meet the needs of the children. The staff receive good advice from their EYS who is employed by the Early Years Organisation (EYO); further support and guidance needs to be provided within the playgroup setting on self-evaluation and development planning for improvement.

- The leader is well-organised and demonstrates good administration skills. In a short period of time, she has developed, in consultation with the EYS and the management group, a wide range of policies, planning and a systematic format for assessment of the children's progress to guide the management and development of the playgroup.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the 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 the playgroup is good; the playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area for improvement.

The area for improvement is:

- to develop further the levels of the staff interaction with the children, in order to ensure that it is consistently of a high standard to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum.

ACCOMMODATION

- The toilet provision outside of the playroom requires relocation to ensure that the most effective use of staff time is in learning rather than supervision beyond the playroom.
- The use of a climbing frame and the quality of the safety mats need to be reviewed to ensure that there is a minimal risk of injury on the tarmacadam surface.

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