



*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

**Macosquin Community Playgroup
Coleraine**

Inspected: November 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Macosquin Community Playgroup
Address:	24 Ramsey Park Macosquin COLERAINE Co Londonderry BT51 4NF
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	17 November 2008
Date of previous inspection:	20 November 2003

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	22	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	15	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	-
• 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	95%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

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
3¼ hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned:	87.5%
Number of written comments:	3

**MACOSQUIN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, COLERAINE, CO LONDONDERRY,
BT51 4NF (3AB-0135)**

1. The pre-school centre is situated within a community house in the centre of Macosquin village. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. The current leader was appointed in September 2005 and a new assistant took up post in September 2008. The centre's current early years specialist (EYS) was also appointed in September 2006. An attractive outdoor play area has been recently developed. The staff report that the enrolment of children in reception provision throughout the year in the local primary school continues to have an adverse effect on the long-term development of the pre-school centre.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Most of the parents responded to the questionnaire and three made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that almost all the parents regard the pre-school centre highly and appreciate that it is a caring place, the children are gaining in confidence as a result of their pre-school experiences and the pre-school centre is well thought of in the community. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the pre-school centre. A majority of the management group expressed a need for training related to their management duties. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management group of the pre-school centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the pre-school centre is outstanding. Among the strengths are the very positive working relationships at all levels and the excellent behaviour of the children. The staff are committed to the care and the well-being of the children; they encourage them to explore feelings and emotions and they plan themes and topics which are based on the children's particular interests.

4. The pre-school centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

5. The pre-school centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have access to a healthy snack and have regular opportunities for a broad range in physical play in the outdoor area.

6. The main strengths within the pre-school centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- The staff work hard to create a very attractive and stimulating learning environment within the playroom. The children's work is very carefully presented, displays are eye-catching and space is used very imaginatively to create exciting interest areas which encourage the children to explore, investigate and share their discoveries. Resources are carefully labelled, easily accessed and offer children choice and variety.

- The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is of a very high standard. The adults engage purposefully with the children, listening to them and building effectively on their ideas. They carefully exploit the learning potential within the activities and the environment and are very skilful in extending the children's thinking and imagination.
- The children enjoy their play and show sustained interest in the range of activities provided. Their language skills are well developed and they display high levels of confidence, independence and creativity.
- There are very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of early mathematical concepts and the children's understanding of the world around them. Good use is made of books throughout all the areas of play and the children have frequent opportunities for early writing, rhymes and songs, responding to music and engaging in imaginative and dramatic role-play.
- The written planning is detailed and used very effectively to guide the staff in their work with the children. Appropriate systems have been developed to help the staff assess and record the children's progress. The information gained through observation of the children's responses is used to inform the planning and to help the staff meet the needs of individuals and groups.

7. The leader manages the pre-school centre very effectively and there is a strong sense of team-spirit among the staff. They share a vision for the strategic development of the pre-school centre. They have developed a systematic approach to self-evaluation and regularly identify appropriate areas for review. Annual action plans help to guide the staff in the process of continuing self-improvement. The contribution made by the pre-school centre's EYS has strengths, including recent cluster training on supporting children with special educational needs and the guidance provided during the development of the outdoor play area. The EYS should continue to work with the staff to support the management group in the process of development planning.

8. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The pre-school centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2008

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.