



*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

**Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Playgroup
Co Antrim**

Inspected: February 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Playgroup
Address:	35A Rathcoole Drive Rathcoole NEWTOWNABBEY Co Antrim BT37 9AQ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	20 February 2008
Date of previous inspection:	24 May 1999

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	23	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	12	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	10	-
• 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	0	-
• with English as an additional language	1	-
• 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	89%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	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	-	194

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	23
Percentage returned:	26.1%
Number of written comments:	1

**NEWTOWNABBEY METHODIST MISSION PLAYGROUP, NEWTOWNABBEY,
CO ANTRIM, BT37 9AQ (3AA-0092)**

1. The pre-school centre is situated in the Newtownabbey Methodist Church Hall, which is shared with other organisations. Since the last inspection the centre withdrew from the expansion programme for two years due to insufficient numbers of pre-school children. It re-entered the programme in September 2007. The leader has been in place for three years and a new temporary assistant was appointed in September 2007.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The small number of responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and any issues raised have been shared with the staff.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The pre-school centre has some appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. Some minor additions are needed to the centre's policies to ensure they are comprehensive. The additions include a code of conduct for the personal care of children, procedures for dealing with potential allegations against staff and a written risk assessment for outings. The inspection evidence indicates that the existing policies and procedures are implemented consistently by the staff.

4. The pre-school centre's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has strengths, and includes a developing commitment to encourage the children to eat healthily and be physically active.

5. The main strengths within the centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- The staff work hard to set up the playroom with a variety of activities on a daily basis.
- The staff are caring, and committed to the children's welfare; they foster a culture of inclusion.
- The best examples of concentrated play observed included the sand play, imaginative role-play in the home corner, and the children's interest in painting and singing.
- The children are generally well behaved and the staff are aware of those children who still require support to develop their social skills.

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

- The staff need to develop their expertise in planning and evaluating a stimulating and challenging pre-school programme which matches the children's wide range of needs and stages of development.

- The staff's interaction with the children needs to be more effective in promoting concentrated play and exploiting the learning within the activities.
- The staff, management group and early years specialist (EYS) need to develop a more collaborative working partnership in order to improve the quality of the provision.

7. The centre has recently drawn up a development plan with some relevant areas for action. This should be amended in line with the findings from this inspection. The contribution made by the centre's EYS has some strengths, including the identification of appropriate areas for improvement. The EYS needs to ensure a more appropriate match between the centre's stage of development and the support and training given.

8. The pre-school centre has a few strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement, which need to be addressed promptly if the pre-school centre is to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

- On the day of the inspection, the use of the building for other group activities meant that access to the building was not adequately controlled by the playgroup staff.

© 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.