

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Panda Cross-Community
Playgroup, Dungannon

Report of an Inspection
in February 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Panda Cross-Community Playgroup
Address:	Killeeshil Community Centre 216 Ballygawley Road DUNGANNON Co Tyrone BT71 1TH
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	3 February 2010
Date of previous inspection:	23 March 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	20	19
• in their immediate pre-school year	20	12
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	20	12
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	1
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
• with English as an additional language	0	1
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	91.2%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	1
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
2½ hrs	2½ hrs	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	35
Percentage returned:	48.6%
Number of written comments:	5

**PANDA CROSS-COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, DUNGANNON, CO TYRONE, BT71 1TH
(5AB-0204)**

1. Panda Cross-Community Playgroup shares the premises of Killeeshil Community Centre on the Ballygawley Road, Dungannon. In addition to the spacious playroom, the playgroup has access to a large indoor hall and outdoor grass play areas. Since the last inspection the assistant Leader and full-time assistant have changed; the Leader is the only remaining member of the original staff team.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the management group and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 35 questionnaires issued to parents, 17 (48.6%) were returned to the Inspection Services Branch and five contained an additional written comment. All the responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision in the playgroup. In particular they expressed appreciation of the helpful, dedicated staff, the special efforts made to help the children settle and the information provided on how their children are progressing. The responses from the management group and the staff were highly supportive of the work of the playgroup. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and have been shared with the staff and management group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good.

4. The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. There is a need for training in child protection for one member of the staff and for the recently formed management committee.

5. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through participation in the Boost Better Breaks programme and the opportunities for the children to engage in regular, energetic play. The children are encouraged to talk about and to adopt healthy lifestyles.

6. The children are happy and confident; they explore the play opportunities independently, making choices about their activities, resources and snack time, and taking responsibility for tidying-up. There are good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum; the development of early mathematics concepts and language is a key strength of the provision. During the inspection, there were many examples of sustained, purposeful play, and good collaborative working.

7. The staff give a high priority to the development of the children's language and communication skills; they provide an interesting range of resources and activities to introduce new language and to stimulate the children's thinking. The children are able to describe their paintings and models, to retell stories and to engage meaningfully in imaginative play; they can discuss in extended conversation, photographic records of some of the play group activities. The staff are aware of the small number of children who require additional support to develop their language and interact effectively with them to meet their needs. Good links have been established with the parents who are encouraged to visit the playgroup and to tell the children about their jobs and the role they play in the community.

8. The interactions between the staff and the children are very good. The staff provide sensitive support and timely interventions to promote both independent and co-operative play; they build effectively on the children's interests and ideas, particularly in relation to the local environment; the children respond well to the challenges from staff to identify and solve problems; the staff make good use of praise to promote the children's confidence and

self-esteem. Where appropriate, they provide guidance to help the children develop specific fine motor skills, such as computer mouse control. The play sessions are well organised with an appropriate balance of free choice and adult-directed activities; the children have learned to manage with appropriate independence, the daily routines and to move easily from one activity to another.

9. The staff have recently reviewed the short-term planning to take account of the children's spontaneous interests; they are making good use of anecdotal observations to assess the children's progress and to inform future planning for individuals and groups of children. This good practice should be further developed to include setting targets for those children with additional learning needs.

10. The centre is well organised. The Leader is a good role-model in her work with the children; she ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the playgroup and places a high priority on staff development. The staff are enthusiastic, committed and work very well together as a team. They have begun the process of self-evaluation, with particular emphasis being placed on the development of the accommodation. There is a need for this process to be further developed and to focus more specifically on enhanced learning outcomes for the children. The early years specialist has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in the playgroup.

11. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the confident and independent children;
- the very good adult interactions with the children;
- the promotion of early mathematical skills and language; and
- the enthusiastic and committed staff who work well together as a team.

12. The priorities identified for further development include the need to:

- develop the self-evaluation and development planning process and to focus more specifically on those areas which will impact on the learning outcomes for the children.

13. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

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