

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Peatlands Playgroup,
Portadown

Report of an Inspection
in December 2012



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



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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:	Peatlands Playgroup
Address:	2 Clonmakate Road Birches PORTADOWN Co Armagh BT62 1LR
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	6 December 2012
Date of previous inspection:	

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	23	
in their immediate pre-school year	23	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	23	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	
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	87.3%	

* 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	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

*** 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
2¾ hours	-	187

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	23
Percentage returned	56%
Number of written comments:	6

1. Introduction

Peatlands Playgroup is located on the Clonmakate Road in Portadown. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has moved into purpose built mobile accommodation, a new member of staff was appointed and a number of early year's specialists from the Early Years Organisation have been supporting the staff. The playgroup's current early years specialist (EYS) has been working with the group since October 2011.

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. Twenty-three questionnaires were issued to the parents and 13 were returned, six with written comments. A small number of the staff and members of the management group returned the questionnaires with written comments. Almost all of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the work of the playgroup. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the leader and the members of the management group who attended the oral report back.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, and provision for learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Good Satisfactory Satisfactory
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are very well-settled and are developing positive attitudes to their learning.
- During the inspection, the majority of the children engaged in purposeful role play; they co-operated well with one another and with the adults. Some of the children are developing firm friendships and many demonstrated good levels of independence.

- The children were observed often browsing in the attractive book area. Some of the children are beginning to create representational paintings and are attempting to write their own name. The children are beginning to count and recognise colour and shape as an integral part of their play.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. The staff are caring and often engage with the children in their play activities. The positive working relationships at all levels foster a supportive family ethos throughout the playgroup. The children are at ease with the staff and turn to them readily for help and support.
- Since moving into the new premises, the staff have worked hard to create a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children. The children's work is valued and presented around the playroom in an attractive manner. Photographs of the children at play are also displayed at an appropriate level; he displays often generate interest and discussion among the children.
- The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, and the development of early mathematical language and skills, are particular strengths of the programme. The staff need to provide more opportunities for the children to explore and investigate a wider range of materials that will stimulate their natural curiosity and develop their technological skills.
- The staff are currently working with their early year's specialist to develop the written planning for the educational programme. It will be important for all of the staff to be involved in this process if they are to fully understand their role in bringing about the children's learning. In particular, they need to identify the learning expected from the activities and to use the children's subsequent achievements to inform future planning.
- A good start has been made to developing a systematic approach to observing the children at play and recording their responses; however more attention needs to be given to meeting the differing needs of the children.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity. During the inspection, a wide range of interesting activities were available during outdoor playtime. As the staff develop the programme for physical play further they should plan for the progressive development of a wider range of the children's physical skills.
- During the inspection, there were many occasions when the staff engaged purposefully with the children to help them to develop their play or provide new ideas which encouraged the children to sustain their interest in their chosen activities.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory

- The leader is a good role-model in her work with the children. The staff are hard-working and dedicated.
- The process of self evaluation and development planning is at a very early stage of development.
- The current early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation is providing very good support to the staff; she has identified appropriate areas for further development and there is evidence that improvements are being made in aspects of the playgroup's work. Since the last inspection, however, the support from the Early years Organisation has been inconsistent; the staff did not have the support of an EYS for a significant period of time and this contributed to the slow pace of change and improvement in the work of the playgroup.

CONCLUSION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and provision for learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- continue to develop further the methods of planning and assessment to provide a broad and balanced programme of activities that progress throughout the year and meet the children's differing needs;
- improve the provision for the promotion of the children's physical, scientific and technological skills; and
- develop further the process of self-evaluation and development planning leading to improvement.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

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