

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Playtime Playgroup, Eskra

Report of an Inspection
in May 2013

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Inspection methods and evidence base	1
3.	Overall finding of the inspection	1
4.	Children's achievements	1
5.	Provision for learning	2
6.	Leadership and management	2
7.	Conclusion	3

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:	Playtime Playgroup
Address:	Eskra Childcare Centre 168 Newtownsaville Road Eskra OMAGH Co Tyrone BT78 3RJ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	21 May 2013
Date of previous inspection:	30 November 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	15	15
in their immediate pre-school year	0	0
funded by Department of Education (DE)	15	0
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	*	*
with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	*
with English as an additional language	0	0
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	%	

* 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	4	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	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 hours	2½ hours	189

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	30
Percentage returned	47%
Number of written comments:	8

1. Introduction

Playtime Playgroup is situated in a day care centre in Eskra, which serves a wide rural catchment area in County Tyrone. The playgroup has expanded significantly from the last inspection and is a feeder pre-school centre for thirteen primary schools. The leader is in post since the last inspections in 2005 and 2007. All remaining staff are newly appointed within the last five years.

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. Thirty questionnaires were issued to the parents and fourteen were returned, eight with written comments. The staff also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all of the aspects of the work of the playgroup. The parents and the staff praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for the children.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

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

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- The children and their parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup. There are excellent relationships between the staff and the children. The children are friendly and co-operate well; they are able to share and take-turns during play activities. Most of the children are able to play for sustained periods of time.
- Most of the children take good care of and use the play materials imaginatively. They are able to self-manage at the snack table by helping with the preparation and pouring their own drinks, however, they need to have more effective adult interaction to stimulate their conversational skills and develop the use of social language. A significant number of the children have a good awareness of print, numbers, and colours in the environment; they are able to use language effectively during stories and role play to convey their ideas.

- There are effective arrangements for early identification and intervention for children with additional needs in language. In the most effective practice the staff appropriately extended the children's imagination and language by offering suggestions and new ideas to develop the children's vocabulary and thinking.
- The children have good fine motor skills and are able to use paintbrushes well. The children enjoy the outdoor learning and are developing well their understanding about farming and quarrying which relates to their local environment.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is outstanding. The playgroup is an integral part of the daycare centre; there is, an inclusive family atmosphere throughout the provision. The staff give careful consideration to the needs of the children and plan appropriate routines to ensure that the children's care is consistently of a high standard. The staff work hard to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem through a supportive and caring ethos. There is a consistent approach to positive behaviour management.
- The staff have created a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children, particularly in the outdoor area, which is greatly enhanced with imaginative and challenging activities to promote the children's curiosity and physical skills. The children's sensory awareness is well-developed through the wide range of flowers and herbs growing in the outdoors. The children's work is; celebrated, presented attractively in the playrooms, labelled appropriately with the children's names, and annotated with text of their spoken words which is effectively developing the children's awareness of the written word.
- There are many instances where the staff build effectively on the children's interest and ideas. It is appropriate that the staff continue to connect the planning across the curricular areas and link to the assessment arrangements to fully utilise the learning potential from all the activities and by building on the children's natural curiosity and interests.
- Effective communication has been established with the parents and outside agencies to support the children identified with special needs. The staff understand the needs of the children well and communicate relevant information about the children's progress and development to the parents. There are effective transitional arrangements made with the local primary schools to which the children transfer to for year one.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The leader is well-organised and effectively leads and manages the playgroup within the wider daycare provision. She has overseen a significant number of developments to enhance the outdoor and indoor provision and to induct new staff. All the staff demonstrate a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to the development of the playgroup. While the staff are at an early stage in the

self-evaluation and development planning process, they have an appropriate overview of most of the key areas for development. The action plans need to focus more sharply on the actions to promote the children's learning and the arrangements for monitoring the improvements made.

- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation has worked with the staff for a number of years and both parties report a very good working relationship. The EYS provides excellent support and guidance and has assisted the staff well in bringing about improvements in the provision.
- The staff communicate effectively with the parents in a range of ways including; home visits, information sessions, nursery rhyme booklet, newsletters, and feedback on the children's progress and development.
- 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.

7. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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