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*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

**Portglenone Community Playgroup
Co Antrim**

Inspected: January 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Portglenone Community Playgroup
Address:	Portglenone Community Centre Gortgole Road PORTGLENONE Co Antrim BT 44 8HT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	23 January 2007
Date of previous inspection:	13 November 2000

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
• funded by Department of Education	24	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	0	-
• 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	92%	-

* Special Educational Needs

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	-	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	-	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	-	2

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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	66.7%
Number of written comments:	6

**PORTGLENONE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, CO ANTRIM, BT44 8HT
(3AB 0253)**

1. The centre is situated in Portglenone Community Centre and the premises are shared with other community groups. The centre does not have access to a secure outdoor play area. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. The current leader was appointed in September 2006 and a new assistant was appointed in January 2007.

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

3. The centre has some appropriate policies and procedures for child protection; some minor additions are needed to ensure they are comprehensive. The inspection evidence indicates that the policies and procedures are implemented consistently by the staff. The staff recognise the need to update their training. The staff and the management committee should take account of the recommendations made in the centre's recent Health and Social Services Trust report.

4. The pre-school centre has begun to implement practices to promote healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle among the children. The staff need to provide more opportunities for the children to participate in a range of energetic physical activities.

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

- There is a friendly, caring atmosphere within the centre and relationships between the staff, parents and children are good. The children respond well to the staff and co-operate with each other during play.
- The staff work hard to create a welcoming and inviting environment for the children. The centre is bright and well maintained, and use is made of displays, books and posters to attract the children's interest.
- The staff provide a range of play activities which provide some opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- Many of the children are confident and articulate, with a strong interest in the world around them. They enjoy looking at books and many show a good development of early writing skills. The children's fine motor skills are developed effectively through the use of a range of equipment and tools in various areas of play.

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

- The staff should review and improve the layout and organisation of the spacious playroom, in order to provide daily opportunities for physical play and to promote more settled, purposeful play in other areas of the room.

- The staff should make better use of the daily routines such as snack time, story-time and home-time to promote the children's learning and independence. The staff should monitor the use made of the various play materials and adapt the activities when necessary during the session to meet the needs and interests of the children.
- The staff need to ensure that their interactions with the children are more effective in exploiting all the learning opportunities within the activities and in promoting more sustained, concentrated and challenging play.
- The staff need to develop a more consistent and systematic approach to assessment in order to ensure that the children's progress is clearly identified and that the information is linked to the written planning to enable the children's differing needs to be met.

7. The recently appointed leader is enthusiastic about her role and shows a positive commitment to the development of the centre. There is a developing sense of team-work among the staff. They require ongoing guidance and support from the centre's management committee and early years specialist to enable them to develop their expertise and improve the work of the centre.

8. The pre-school centre has a few strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified important 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 pre-school centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

APPENDIX

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The toilets are situated at some distance from the playroom, in an area used by other visitors to the building. A member of staff is required to accompany the children to and from the playroom. This has a disruptive effect on the quality of the programme.

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