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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



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Poyntzpass Community Playgroup
Newry

Inspected: May 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Poyntzpass Community Playgroup
Address:	The Meeting Place 16-18 Church Street Poyntzpass NEWRY Co Down BT35 6SW
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	10 May 2007
Date of previous inspection:	24 April 2001

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	26	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	22	-
• funded by Department of Education	21	-
• 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	2	-
• 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	88%	-

* 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	5	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	5	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	3	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
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 ¹ / ₆ hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	25
Percentage returned:	80%
Number of written comments:	7

**POYNTZPASS COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 6SW
(5AB-0330)**

1. The centre operates as a cross-community playgroup serving a very rural location. It is accommodated in purpose-built playrooms within a community building situated on the main street of the village. Since the last inspection, there have been several staffing changes including a new leader who has been very recently appointed. The playgroup has experienced disruption to the staffing arrangements due to delays in the vetting procedures.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The very large number of parents who responded expressed a high level of satisfaction with the provision. A number of parents added written comments praising the work of the staff and noting the importance of the playgroup as a valuable asset within this rural community.

3. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures to safeguard the children.

4. The pre-school centre demonstrates a commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a range of appropriate energetic physical activities.

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

- The new purpose built accommodation provides a bright, spacious playroom and attractive outdoor area. The staff enhance the playroom with distinct areas for play, attractive displays of the children's own art work and topical interest areas.
- There are caring relationships between the staff and the children.
- The daily timetable provides a good balance between the children's freely chosen play, outdoor play and a group story session.
- There are good examples of staff interaction when some of the staff effectively promote language, thinking and learning as they engage with the children.
- There are satisfactory opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection, particular strengths were the children's involvement in imaginative home play, the interest shown by the girls in early marking and writing, the use made of books and the provision for energetic physical play.
- The staff are hard-working and committed to the welfare of the children.
- The newly appointed leader is enthusiastic and has a clear vision for developing the staff team and the quality of the provision. She is a good role-model in her own work with the children.

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

- The staff need to review their behaviour management policy and implement their procedures more consistently to promote settled and productive play among all of the children.
- The staff should continue to develop their planning in order to identify the learning to be promoted more clearly; they should link the information gained from their assessments to ensure a closer match between the activities provided and the children's stages of development.
- The staff need to work closely with the leader and the centre's early years specialist to develop further their skills in consistently promoting the children's language and learning throughout the session.
- There is a need to review and improve aspects of the organisation of the day.

7. The centre is at an early stage in developing its approach to self-evaluation. There is as yet no written development plan. The early years specialist has made some useful contributions to aspects of the centre's development, during a period of change. She should now provide more focused support on key areas of the provision. The leader, management group and early years specialist should use the inspection findings as a basis to draw up a development plan which clearly identifies the actions to be taken to bring about improvement in the areas identified.

8. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement which need to be addressed 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.

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