



*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

**Rathfriland Pre-School Playgroup
Newry**

Inspected: May 2008

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Rathfriland Pre-school Playgroup
Address:	21 John Street Rathfriland NEWRY Co Down BT34 5QH
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	22 May 2008
Date of previous inspection:	13 March 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	23	24
• in their immediate pre-school year	23	24
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	24
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	5
• 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	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• percentage attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	91.2%	89.4%

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	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
2½ hours	2½ hours	186

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	46
Percentage returned:	60.9%
Number of written comments:	10

RATHFRILAND PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, CO DOWN, BT34 5QH (5AB-0398)

1. The playgroup is located in Rathfriland Community Centre which is situated in the centre of the town. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes including a new leader.

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. In their response to the inspection questionnaire, the parents, management group and staff expressed a high level of satisfaction with the centre's provision.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection is very good. The centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The friendly, caring ethos promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and good behaviour. The children make full use of, and clearly enjoy, the attractive and rich learning environment created for them by the staff; they display a positive attitude to their learning and often engage in play that is both purposeful and productive.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently very good and, at times, is excellent. The close involvement of the staff in the activities helps to ensure that opportunities to promote language and learning are exploited fully.
- There are excellent opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum that promote effectively the children's all-round development.
- The daily timetable is well-organised and provides suitable periods of uninterrupted play during which the children have adequate time to make choices and to explore fully the wide range of activities.
- The detailed and systematic methods of planning and assessment provide effective guidance for the staff in their day-to-day work with the children.
- The leader and the deputy leader bring a high level of skill and enthusiasm to their work. They promote a strong sense of team-work among the hard-working staff who contribute well to the overall effectiveness of the centre.

6. Although at an early stage in the process of self-evaluation the centre has drawn up a comprehensive development plan with appropriate targets identified for improvement and subsequent action plans. There is evidence to date that the process has led to improvements in the quality of the provision and the learning experiences for the children.

7. While the staff report that the support provided by the early years specialist is well-focused, in particular the cluster support and the appropriate areas identified for improvement, they also report that the overall support provided by the Early Years Organisation is just satisfactory.

8. The quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is excellent. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being very well met. The parents can have confidence in the pre-school centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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