

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rhyme Times Playgroup,
Lisburn

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:	Rhyme Times Playgroup
Address:	Thiepval Barracks Magheralave Road LISBURN BT28 3BN
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	10 December 2012
Date of previous inspection:	April 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	26	-
in their immediate pre-school year	20	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	20	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	*	-
with a statement of special educational needs		-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	-
with English as an additional language	*	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school		-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	79%	-

* Denotes a number 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	0	6
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	6
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

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	-	

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned	39%
Number of written comments:	*

1. Introduction

Rhyme Times Playgroup consists of two playgroup rooms which are accommodated in large mobile units within Thiepval Military Base in Lisburn. The children who attend the playgroup come from both the military families stationed at the base and from families within the local community. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new leader in one of the playgroup rooms. At the time of this inspection, due to the transient nature of the military personnel and their families and the disbanding of the main regiment at the base, the number of children with funded places who were attending the playgroup had reduced significantly .

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 setting.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The parent, staff and management committee questionnaire responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the setting. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the pre-school leaders, the manager and the chair of the management committee.

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 children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Very good
Quality of Provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

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

- The children are well-motivated and engage positively and enthusiastically with their learning. During the inspection, all of the children engaged in sustained and purposeful play.
- The children are confident in talking with the adults in the playrooms and the majority communicate well with each other during their activities. The children enjoy the informal group stories and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Many of the children display high levels of interest in early writing during the post office role play.

- The children are confident in exploring the good range of art materials and use them creatively to explore patterns, build simple models and make early representations. The children show a good level of interest in early mathematical concepts and were observed making patterns, sorting, comparing and counting at a wide range of activities.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is excellent. The staff are caring and supportive and set high expectations for the children's behaviour and their learning, through the consistent use of positive behaviour strategies and the effective use of praise and encouragement. The children are very well-behaved and there is a happy, relaxed, family ethos.
- The quality of the staff interactions with the children was always good and, in the majority of cases, it was very good or outstanding. The staff have a very good shared understanding of the learning to be developed and are skilful in encouraging the children to persevere and complete tasks and take part in productive play. Key vocabulary and a wide range of early mathematical language are modelled in a natural way by the staff across all of the areas of play.
- The staff provide well-resourced areas for play in a language rich environment, which is further enhanced by the very good use of natural materials. The playgroup's educational programme offers very good opportunities for learning in almost all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The staff implement detailed weekly planning which is responsive to the needs and interests of the children. They make effective use of their observations of the children's learning to inform the parents and plan an appropriate programme for the children. The staff have appropriately identified the need to develop further the planning and resources for outdoor play.
- The playgroup provides an inclusive educational environment with good support for those children who have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and development. The staff have developed useful strategies to help the children to overcome their barriers to learning and have established good links with outside agencies. In addition, sensitive and effective support is provided for newcomer children who speak English as an additional language.
- The children are provided with a well organised, healthy snack and have regular opportunities for physical activity both outdoors and in the gymnasium on the base.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The playgroup operates with an overall manager and a playgroup leader in each of the rooms. The leadership and management team are committed to the continued improvement and development of the playgroup. There is a strong sense of teamwork within each of the playrooms and the whole staff engage collaboratively on occasion. The staff have had relevant training and very good support from their early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation.
- The leadership and management have made a very good start to involving all of the staff in reflecting on their current practice. Self-evaluation processes are becoming embedded into their daily practice and clear improvement is evident in the areas of under recent focus including the development of the garden area and the effective use of the indoor play areas.
- 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.
- The playgroup have established very good links with the parents, the local primary schools to which the children transfer and other agencies. A particular strength is the excellent use made of the opportunities provided by the facilities within the base to broaden the children's learning experiences, for example, the library, the post office and the recycling centre.
- It will be important that the management committee, the manager and the playgroup leaders plan for, and manage, issues related to the size, funding and sustainability of the playgroup provision caused by the fluctuations in the number of children attending.

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 children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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