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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

Right Rascals Day Nursery Playgroup Killinchy

Inspected: November 2006

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Right Rascals Day Nursery Playgroup
Address:	17 Kilmoody Church Road KILLINCHY Co Down BT23 6SA
Management Type:	Private

Date of inspection:	22 November 2006
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	46	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	22	-
• funded by Department of Education	22	-
• 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:		
• percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	84%	-

* 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	4	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	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
3 hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	53.8%
Number of written comments:	6

**RIGHT RASCALS DAY NURSERY PLAYGROUP, KILLINCHY, CO DOWN,
BT23 6SA (4CA-0530)**

1. The two pre-school rooms are located within the purpose-built premises of Right Rascals Day Nursery. The children come from the surrounding area.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. Those who responded indicated a high level of satisfaction with the overall provision of the centre. A minority of parents included written comments praising the work of the staff. The few issues raised by the parents have been discussed with the manager and proprietor of the nursery.

3. The centre has in place appropriate procedures for pastoral care and child protection. The parents are given information about the centre's policies and procedures.

4. The pre-school centre demonstrates commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Further attention needs to be given to providing opportunities for the children to participate in a wider range of physical activities.

5. The main findings of the inspection are as follows:

- the staff work hard to make an attractive learning environment within the playroom, which is enhanced with some displays of the children's own art work and interest areas. The centre has a very positive ethos based on good working relationships at all levels. The children are at ease with the staff and turn to them confidently to meet their needs, to share in their play and for reassurance and support;
- the children benefit from the extended period of free play during which they explore freely the full range of activities. The buffet break is organised efficiently and the children have opportunity for a group story and daily sessions of physical play. The staff need to review aspects of the latter part of the session in order to ensure good learning experiences for the children and to promote smooth transitions;
- the staff are all sensitive and supportive in their involvement with the children. They spend sustained periods with groups and individuals. During the inspection, there were some good examples when the staff demonstrated a skilful approach in their interactions with the children; they asked open-ended questions and extended the children's ideas and thinking as an integral part of their play. On other occasions the interaction was overly directive, this resulted in missed opportunities for learning. All of the staff need to develop greater skill in recognising the potential of the materials and in using effective strategies to promote the children's language and learning;
- there are satisfactory learning opportunities in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff need to develop these activities in order to ensure adequate challenge and progression for the children throughout the year;

- the children are developing confidence and independence and there are good examples of co-operative and purposeful play. The children choose freely from the range of activities on offer and some good instances of sustained concentration were observed during the inspection. While there are some good opportunities for the children to express their own ideas through a range of art work and for the children to enjoy group singing sessions, more opportunities could be created for the children to make music;
- the children are developing their fine motor skills through their use of small equipment such as paintbrushes and pencils. They have daily sessions of physical play outdoors. The staff have appropriately identified this as an area for further development;
- the staff promote the children's oral language appropriately through discussion as they engage with the children during the activities. The children enjoy browsing through books and listening to stories. They have a repertoire of rhymes and action songs and join in enthusiastically. The staff provide useful opportunities to promote the children's early marking and writing skills;
- during the inspection, the staff used appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play and promoted an interest in counting, matching and making comparisons. The staff need to exploit these opportunities further as they develop the programme throughout the year; and
- the children's experiences of the world around them are extended usefully by members of the local community who visit the centre and by visits to places of interest. Early scientific ideas are developed through play with sand and water.

6. The centre has an appropriate policy for special educational needs (SEN). The centre has not identified any children to date who have additional needs. The staff need to broaden their training in order to develop their capacity to work with children with special educational needs in the future.

7. The staff have begun to develop a key-worker system and to observe and record the children's responses to play. They need to continue to develop their skill in recording and evaluating the children's learning. The staff should develop ways of using this information to provide appropriate activities and to support the needs of individual children. There is valuable co-operation with the parents, as well as with health and other education professionals.

8. The staff are developing good links with the parents. Appropriate information on the curriculum and their children's progress is shared regularly using a variety of means. The communication with the parents is effective; an information leaflet, regular newsletters and educational evenings are designed to encourage the parents to play a full role in the education of their children. In addition to the daily informal meetings, the pre-school leaders report that the parents are invited into the centre on three occasions throughout the year to discuss their children's progress. The staff report that an effective link has been established with the local primary school.

9. The staff have made a useful start in developing their written planning. The planning identifies relevant themes and topics and highlights aspects of the learning to be promoted. The staff need to continue to develop a shared understanding of the learning to be promoted through the play activities and how the children's learning will progress over the year. The management group need to ensure that the staff have more opportunities to develop the planning of the programme together.

10. The nursery manager and the pre-school leaders are enthusiastic and fully committed to the children and the development of the centre. The centre's development plan identifies, as a priority for the current academic year, a review of the outdoor physical play programme. The inspection findings concur with this.

11. There is evidence of many improvements within the centre since entering the programme two years ago. The manager, leaders and early years specialist should now work together to adapt their development plan in order to identify the priorities for further improvement, highlighted by the inspection.

12. The staff make imaginative use of the space available within the centre. They need to continue to develop their resources in order to support the implementation of a broad and stimulating programme of pre-school education. The quality of the purpose-built accommodation is very good.

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

- The positive ethos which helps to promote the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The efforts made by the staff in creating an attractive learning environment.
- The instances of productive and concentrated play.
- The progress being made introducing an informal snack.
- The instances of staff involvement which extend aspects of the children's language and thinking.
- The satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The good links established with the parents.
- The progress made in developing aspects of the overall provision to date.
- The committed and dedicated manager, leaders and the hard-working staff.

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

The staff should continue to:

- work together more consistently in order to develop the methods of planning and assessment to ensure that the activities progress appropriately throughout the year, that the information gained through the observations of the play is linked to the planning and that the children's differing needs are met;
- ensure that the organisation of the day flows smoothly and all the time is used effectively for learning;
- develop the programme of physical play in order to provide the children with a greater variety of experiences. The staff have appropriately begun to plan this development; and
- develop the staff's skill in recognising and exploiting fully the learning inherent in the play activities and materials in order to promote effectively and more informally the children's language and learning.

15. 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.

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