



*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

**Roe Valley Community Playgroup
Limavady**

Inspected: November 2006

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Roe Valley Community Playgroup
Address:	17 Rathbeg Drive LIMAVADY Co Londonderry BT49 0BB
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	15 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	24	24
• in their immediate pre-school year	18	17
• funded by Department of Education	14	16
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	3
• with a statement of SEN*	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	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	100%	100%

* 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	2	2
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	1

*** 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	208

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	35
Percentage returned:	34%
Number of written comments:	4

**ROE VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, LIMAVADY, CO LONDONDERRY,
BT49 0AQ (2AB-0532)**

1. Roe Valley Community Playgroup is accommodated in purpose-built premises which are managed by Limavady Community Development Initiative (LCDI). The premises are shared with an after-school's club. 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.

3. The centre has in place appropriate procedures for pastoral care and child protection. Some additions are needed to ensure they meet the requirements for these young children. The inspection evidence indicates that the existing policies and procedures are implemented consistently by the staff.

4. The pre-school gives some consideration to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. The children have daily opportunities to participate in a 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 displays of the children's own art work and interest areas. The children are generally well settled and respond appropriately to the staff's expectations of good behaviour. There is a supportive, caring atmosphere based on good working relationships between the children and the staff;
- 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 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. 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. The staff should continue to develop and build on these skills;
- there are some valuable 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. 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 printing tools. They have regular sessions of physical play both indoors and outdoors. The staff have appropriately identified this as an area for further development;
- the staff promote the children's oral language well 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 need to provide more opportunities to promote the children's early marking and writing skills; and
- some useful early mathematical and scientific ideas are developed through the sand and water play. The staff need to develop these opportunities further as they develop the programme throughout the year.

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.

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.

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 now need to ensure that the staff have more opportunities to develop the planning of the programme together.

10. The leader demonstrates a strong commitment to the children, to raising the quality of the work within the centre and to developing links with the wider community. She generates a strong sense of team-work among the hard-working staff. The centre has not yet developed a structured approach to self-evaluation.

11. There is evidence of many improvements within the centre since entering the programme one year ago. The leader and early years specialist should now work together to draw up a development plan which identifies relevant priorities for further improvement.

12. The staff make imaginative use of all 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 current outdoor play area is not appropriate for energetic physical play.

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

- the caring and supportive atmosphere based on good working relationships between the staff and the children;
- the instances of productive and concentrated play during the initial period of free play;
- the efforts made by the staff in creating an attractive learning environment;
- the start made in planning and assessing the educational programme;
- the instances of staff involvement which extend aspects of the children's language and thinking;
- the developing good links established with the parents and the wider community;
- the progress made in developing aspects of the overall provision to date; and
- the committed and dedicated leader 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:

- 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;
- 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;
- ensure that the organisation of the day flows smoothly and all the time is used effectively for learning; and
- work together more consistently in order to develop the planning and assessment methods, to evaluate the quality of the children's experiences and the developing programme, and to develop a deeper understanding of how they might promote the children's language and learning.

15. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

- The decking area used for outdoor physical play becomes slippery when wet and presents a safety hazard.

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