

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Seymour Hill Pre-School
Playgroup, Lisburn

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Seymour Hill Pre-school Playgroup
Address:	Seymour Hill Primary School Hazel Avenue Seymour Hill LISBURN Co Antrim BT17 9QA
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	27 April 2010
Date of previous inspection:	27 May 2003

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school centre	18	-
in their immediate pre-school year	18	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	5	-
with a statement of special educational needs	1	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
with English as an additional language	1	-
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	96%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	3
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	-	194

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned:	38.9%
Number of written comments:	0

SEYMOUR HILL PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT17 9QA (4AB-0495)

1. Seymour Hill Pre-school Playgroup is situated in Seymour Hill Primary School. Almost all the children come from the surrounding area.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

3. Most of the children are well-settled and engage in sustained and purposeful play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They demonstrate good levels of independence in their selection of play resources and materials to create their own paintings and play imaginatively during role-play opportunities. A small number of children are supported sensitively and skilfully by the staff, who promote the children's co-operation with their peers during the play activities.

4. Most of the children are making good progress with their language skills. This is evident in the children's good level of discussion during the play activities and, in particular, their early understanding of characterisation promoted by the staff's well constructed story sessions, often involving puppets to enhance the children's enjoyment of fairy tales. In addition, the children enjoy accessing a good range of fiction and non-fiction books relevant to the play activities.

5. During the inspection, the staff and the children used appropriate mathematical language, for example, in stories, songs and rhymes, and as an integral part of the play activities and the daily routines. Most of the children are gaining a good understanding of the early mathematical concepts associated with number, shape, pattern and measurement. Most of the children are also developing their skills of reasoning and logic through the constructional and scientific play activities.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6. The playgroup's educational programme provides good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. The particular strengths include the attention given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development, the children's interest in role-play and early mathematical ideas and concepts. During the inspection, there were many good examples of skilful interaction by the staff which extended the children's language and thinking skills. The staff should continue to develop and build upon this good practice.

7. The weekly planners provide useful guidance for the staff, and the four-weekly planners contain appropriate themes, which develop a range of learning activities and experiences for the children. The staff are developing an appropriate system of assessing the children's learning and development. They operate a key-worker system which allows them to observe the children's responses to play, and they are building up useful individual profiles of the children's achievements. Further development of this process is needed in order to highlight clearly the children's progress and to inform the next steps in their learning.

8. The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is very good. Among the strengths are the very good working relationships between the staff and the children, the consistent approach applied by all of the staff in promoting positive behaviour, and the welcoming atmosphere that permeates throughout the playgroup.

9. The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. The management committee needs to ensure that all committee members receive updated child protection training and copies of the revised child protection policy. In addition, the committee members who sit on the interview/appointment panels need to participate in specific training on the recruitment and the vetting of staff.

10 The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating; for example, fruit is provided on a daily basis and the children have access to drinking water during the break session. The children benefit from the satisfactory opportunities for outdoor physical play activities on a regular basis.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader is committed to the development of the playgroup. The staff plan and evaluate the programme together and all contribute to the successful operation of the playgroup. They value the very good guidance and advice offered by the early years specialist. It would be beneficial for the staff to develop a more strategic approach to self-evaluation to sustain improvement in the children's learning experiences and, in particular, to extend the range of resources and the provision for outdoor play.

12. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Approximately 39% of the parents responded to the questionnaire. The responses from the parental questionnaires highlighted the parents' appreciation of the good quality of the playgroup's provision and the very good working relationships. Three members of staff responded to the staff questionnaires. All of the responses commented positively on the quality of the leadership of the playgroup, the good team work and the support for the playgroup by the early years specialist and the Principal of Seymour Hill Primary School. The management committee responses commended the staff's commitment to the development of the playgroup and the children's enjoyment of their pre-school experience. The Inspectorate has reported to the staff and a representative of the management committee the main messages emerging from the questionnaires.

13. The key strengths in this playgroup include:

- the good opportunities to learn in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the strong sense of teamwork among the staff who are committed to the children's welfare and to developing the quality of provision in the playgroup;
- the positive ethos based on very good working relationships and the children's good behaviour; and
- the good quality of the children's progress in learning and the development of their social and their language skills.

14. The priority identified for further development includes the need:

- to continue the development of the assessment methods and to link the information more effectively to the short-term planning.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

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