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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Slievegallion Community Pre-School Magherafelt

Inspected: November 2009

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Slievegallion Community Pre-School
Address:	62b Longfield Road Desertmartin MAGHERAFELT Co Londonderry BT45 5LS
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	11 November 2009
Date of previous inspection:	1 June 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	22	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	4	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• 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	98%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
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:	22
Percentage returned:	82%
Number of written comments:	17

SLIEVEGALLION COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL, DESERTMARTIN, MAGHERAFELT, CO LONDONDERRY, BT45 5LS (3AB-0138)

1. Slievegallion Community Pre-School is situated on the outskirts of Desertmartin. The children come mainly from the village and the wider rural area. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. A new deputy leader took up post in 2005, and two new assistants have been appointed. The centre acquired new spacious mobile accommodation in 2006. The outdoor play area has been extended and developed to include a covered awning, a garden area and a space for physical play.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Most of the parents (82%) responded to the questionnaire and 17 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were wholly positive and indicated that the parents regard the pre-school centre very highly. The responses from the staff and management questionnaires were also very positive. The management committee commented on the dedication and commitment of the staff and the efforts made to provide high standards of care and education for the children. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the pre-school is outstanding. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming and the pervading ethos is one of caring support and respect for the children and their families. Among the strengths are the very positive working relationships at all levels and the priority given to the children's well-being; the children are settled, confident and happy, and their behaviour is excellent.

4. The pre-school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

5. The pre-school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The centre has a policy on healthy eating which is shared with the parents and information on food and health is available for the children in different areas of the playroom. The children have frequent opportunities to prepare and taste healthy foods and have daily access to a range of energetic physical play activities.

6. The main strengths within the pre-school centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- The children have settled very well and are very familiar with the daily routines. They engage in lengthy periods of concentrated, productive and co-operative play. They talk about their experiences confidently and show a good interest in books and early mark-making. They can retell favourite stories and some are beginning to recognise letter shapes and names. Their drawings and paintings are beginning to show representational detail and they enjoy and respond to rhymes, songs and music-making. They are very interested in the natural world and handle real tools very competently in their role-play and construction. They are demonstrating very good progress in their overall development, in relation to their age and the time of the year.

- The staff work hard to create a very attractive and stimulating learning environment within the playroom, and outdoors. The children's work is very carefully presented, displays are eye-catching and space is used very imaginatively to create exciting interest areas which encourage the children to explore, investigate and share their discoveries. Resources are carefully labelled, easily accessed and children are able to exercise choice and make decisions about their play.
- The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is of a very high standard. The adults engage purposefully with the children, listening to them and building effectively on their ideas. They encourage the children to recall, predict and problem-solve and they use good mathematical language in a very natural and incidental way. They carefully exploit the learning potential within the activities and the environment and are very skilful in extending the children's thinking and imagination, developing in the children a sense of fun, excitement and wonder.
- The quality of the written documentation is of a very high standard. Methods of planning are detailed but flexible, allowing the staff to take account of the children's interests as they arise. The children's learning and progress is carefully assessed and recorded, using photographs and perceptive observations; this information is used to improve the planning and is shared regularly with the parents.
- The pre-school provides very good support for those children with special educational needs. A member of staff has been designated as special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and children's needs are identified early and documented appropriately. In partnership with the parents, individual educational and care plans have been developed in line with the Code of Practice, and effective links have been established with other health professionals.
- The staff work hard to keep the parents informed of and involved in the life and work of the pre-school. Induction and transition booklets are attractive and informative; photographs and Digital Versatile Disks are used very effectively to help parents engage in their children's learning and the parents are encouraged to contribute regularly to the pre-school's self-evaluation processes. The staff have also developed strong pastoral links with the local primary schools.

7. The person-in-charge of the playgroup provides excellent leadership and manages the centre very effectively. Through her creativity, enthusiasm and energy, she inspires a strong sense of team-spirit among the staff, and they share her commitment to innovation and improvement. The staff have a clear vision for the strategic development of the centre. They have developed a systematic approach to self-evaluation and regularly identify appropriate areas for review. The early years specialist has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this pre-school centre. The staff report that the support provided is well focused, and they appreciate, in particular, the opportunities to visit other pre-schools. The centre's development plan helps to guide the staff and the management committee in the process of continuing self-improvement.

8. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The pre-school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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