



*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**

**Springfield Primary School Playgroup  
Belfast**

**Inspected: November 2006**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Springfield Primary School Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	425 Springfield Road BELFAST BT12 7DU
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	6 November 2006
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	N/A

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	12	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	9	-
• funded by Department of Education	9	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	9	-
• 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	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		-
• percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	87%	-

\* Special Educational Needs

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

### 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	1	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	1	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	1
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

### 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
3 hours	-	183

### 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	12
Percentage returned:	5
Number of written comments:	2

## **REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, BELFAST, BT12 7DU (1AB-0531)**

1. The pre-school is accommodated in a classroom within Springfield Road Primary School. The children come from the immediate 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 provision. A small number of parents included written comments praising the work of the staff.

3. The pre-school centre has some appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The staff are currently in the process of reviewing and updating all of the policies 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. There are opportunities for the children to participate in a range of physical activities.

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

- the staff work hard to create an attractive learning environment within the playroom, which is enhanced with displays of the children's own art work. There is a happy, caring atmosphere based on good relationships between the children and the staff. The children are generally well settled and respond well to the staff's expectations of good behaviour;
- 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 outdoor play. The staff need to review the latter part of the session in order to ensure good learning experiences for the children throughout this period;
- the staff are all sensitive and supportive in their engagement with the children. During the inspection, there were many good examples when the staff demonstrated a skilful approach in their interaction with the children; they asked good open-ended questions and exploited a range of learning through the activities. The staff should continue to develop and build on these skills;
- there are some opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Particular strengths are in the attention given to developing the children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and the promotion of the children's own creative ideas;
- the children are developing confidence and independence and there are many examples of co-operative and purposeful play. The children make good use of the creative area to express their own ideas through a variety of art activities. More opportunities could be created to develop imaginative play;

- the children are developing their fine motor skills through their use of tools such as rollers and paintbrushes. They have regular sessions of physical play both indoors and outdoors. The staff need to develop their planning and a wider range of resources to provide a more challenging physical play programme;
- the staff promote effectively the children's oral language through discussion as they engage with the children at the activities. The children know a wide range of rhymes and action songs and join in enthusiastically. Staff need to give more emphasis to the promotion of the children's listening skills, enjoyment of books in the book area and opportunities for early marking; and
- during the inspection some members of staff promoted effectively early mathematical language and concepts through the water and sand play. These good examples should be built on by all of the staff in order to promote a wider range of early mathematical ideas and language.

6. The staff are alert to some children's need for additional support and give sensitive support during the session. They liaise with the parents appropriately. The staff should access training in order to gain further skill in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

7. The staff have made good progress in developing their written planning. The planning identifies relevant themes and topics and highlights aspects of the learning to be promoted. Staff make useful evaluations of the weekly programme which are used to inform changes to activities.

8. A useful start has been made in developing an appropriate system for recording the children's progress in learning. The staff need to continue to develop their skill in recording and using this information in order to match activities and support to the needs of individual children and to inform parents of their children's progress.

9. The staff are developing links with the parents through a variety of appropriate means such as the newsletter, noticeboard, lending library and 'Adventure Ted'. A number of parents have completed their childcare training through their work within the playgroup.

10. The leader demonstrates a strong commitment to the children, to raising the quality of the work within the centre and developing links with the wider community. She is a good role-model in her own work with the children and generates a strong sense of team-work among the hard-working staff. The staff have worked hard to implement the good advice and guidance provided by the centre's early years specialist. They value the strong support of the management committee.

11. There is evidence of many improvements within the centre since entering the programme. The leader and early years specialist should now work together to draw up development plans which identify relevant priority areas for future action and continuous improvement.

12. The staff work hard to make good use of all of the available space within the centre. The toilets are located out of the playroom; a member of staff has to accompany small groups of children to use the toilets. The large indoor hall and part of the playground are used to facilitate the physical play programme.

13. The centre is applying for funding from a range of sources to improve the range of basic resources. There are inadequate resources to provide sufficient challenge and progression throughout the year. In particular, resources are required for developing physical play, construction and imaginative play.

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

- the happy, caring atmosphere based on good relationships between the staff and the children;
- the efforts made in creating an attractive learning environment;
- the progress made in developing and implementing the written planning;
- the good examples of staff interaction which extend aspects of the children's language and thinking;
- the concentrated and productive play during the initial period of free play;
- the promotion of the children's PSED;
- the development and celebration of the children's own creative art work;
- the progress made in developing the quality of the overall provision to date; and
- the effective leadership and the strong sense of team-work.

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

The staff should continue to:

- build on the best examples of staff interaction to ensure it is of a consistently high level throughout the session; and
- develop their skill in recording and making effective use of the children's assessment records.

16. 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.

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