

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Columba's Pre-School
Group, Kilrea

Report of an Inspection
in December 2012

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	St Columba's Pre School Group
Address:	3 Agivey Raod Kilrea COLERAINE Co Derry BT51 5UT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	10 December 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	-	16
in their immediate pre-school year	-	9
funded by Department of Education (DE)	-	9
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	-	0
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	-	*
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	-	91%

* English as an additional language = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	1
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
-	2½ hours	183

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned	44%
Number of written comments:	**

** = fewer than five

1. Introduction

St Columba's Pre-school Group operates during the afternoon in the premises of St Columba's Primary School on the outskirts of Kilrea. The playgroup opened in September 2011. The playgroup leader is also the teacher in the school's nursery unit which operates each morning in the same premises.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents and staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Out of sixteen questionnaires issued to the parents, 44% were returned. All of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the work of the playgroup. All of the questionnaires issued to the staff and management committee were returned; these also contained written comments which affirmed strongly the playgroup's provision. The reporting inspector discussed the questionnaires with the leader and the chair of the management committee of the playgroup who attended the oral report back.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

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

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The children's achievements are good.

- The children are very well-behaved and relaxed in their learning environment. They turn easily to the adults for help and guidance.
- The children are well-settled and most engage confidently in collaborative and sustained play. The adults now need to ensure that those children still engaged in solitary play are encouraged to join in the group play activities.
- The children's listening skills are well-developed; they are very attentive and engage fully during story and action song sessions. Many children enjoy browsing the range of books provided and they are keen to share their thoughts and suggestions with the other children.

- The children demonstrate good independence and self-management skills in carrying out their regular routines, for example, during snack and tidy up times.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The children are provided with a range of activities across the pre-school curriculum. The adults show high levels of warmth and care in their interactions with the children; however, during the inspection, there were some missed opportunities to extend the children's language development.
- The staff have begun to review their observations, assessment and planning: there is a need to develop further the working links between these aspects. In addition, it will be important for the staff to review the overall organisation of the session and the use of the children's routines to achieve the fullest learning potential from all the activities provided. For example, the adults need to consider how to promote a wider range of early mathematical learning and language through the various activities and routines.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. This is evident through, for example, the very good relationships at all levels and the very caring and inclusive ethos in the playgroup.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and developing early understanding about healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

- The experienced and dedicated playgroup leader has a clear vision for improving further the overall quality of the work of the playgroup. She has led the other staff in evaluating important aspects of its provision.
- The playgroup's development plan identifies appropriately the need to develop and extend the outdoor learning provision. The inspection findings endorse this key development focus; the staff now need to implement this action for improvement at a swifter pace.
- The playgroup has established very good links with the local community; these include the very good use made of a varied range of visits and visitors to extend the children's learning. The parents are provided with regular and detailed information which encourages their full involvement in their children's early education. The playgroup leader has appropriately sought the views of parents through the use of questionnaires.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected the quality of the education provided in this playgroup is good and the quality of the pastoral care is very good. The playgroup has important strengths in most aspects of its educational provision. The inspection has identified the following area for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address:

- the need to review and improve the links between the observation and assessment of what the children know and can do, and the subsequent planning in order to ensure progression for all of the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area for improvement.

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