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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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

**St Mary's Pre-School
Cloughcor, Strabane**

Inspected: October 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	St Mary's Pre-School
Address:	20 Cloughcor Road Ballymagorry STRABANE Co Tyrone BT82 0BE
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	10 October 2007
Date of previous inspection:	24 October 2001

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
• funded by Department of Education	24	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	1	-
• 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	95%	-

* 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	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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	46%
Number of written comments:	7

ST MARY'S PRE-SCHOOL, BALLYMAGORRY, STRABANE, CO TYRONE, BT82 0BE (2BB-0346)

1. The centre is situated in refurbished classroom accommodation within St Mary's Primary School. The children come from a wide surrounding area. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. The current leader took up post in September 2005. An attractive outdoor play area has recently been developed.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and any issues raised have been shared with the staff. Those parents who responded expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the pre-school centre is excellent. The centre has an excellent ethos and comprehensive policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates all of the staff show a high level of concern for the children's welfare and implement the policies and procedures very effectively.

4. The centre gives excellent attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The centre has a very positive ethos with a clear sense of purpose, and relationships at all levels are excellent. The staff are caring and supportive; the children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They respond well to the adults' expectations and their behaviour is excellent.
- The staff have created a very attractive, stimulating and rich learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. The children's work is thoughtfully displayed and exciting interest areas have been created to extend the children's thinking skills.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is consistently of a very high standard. The adults skilfully exploit the learning potential within the planned activities, and help develop conversations which stimulate and sustain the children's interests and promote co-operative and purposeful play.
- The staff provide a broad range of stimulating activities which provide very good opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children respond enthusiastically to the centre's programme; they show high levels of interest, motivation and concentration.

- The staff have identified children who require additional support, particularly in relation to speech and language difficulties. They liaise effectively with the parents and other professional agencies. Individual educational plans have been developed and the staff have accessed a number of training opportunities to enable them to meet the needs of these children more effectively.
- The centre has developed strong and effective pastoral and curricular links with the primary school.

6. The leader manages the centre very effectively. She is an excellent role-model in her work with the children and the staff show high levels of professional expertise and a sound understanding of young children's learning. The staff and management group share a common vision for the development of the centre and there is a strong culture of reflection and self-evaluation. The staff have identified appropriate areas for review and this has led to improvement in the children's experiences, particularly in relation to their physical play and their creative development.

7. The staff report that the contribution made by the centre's early years specialist has important strengths, including the provision of training opportunities and cluster support. The management group has requested more focused support in relation to the development planning process.

8. The quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is excellent. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being very well met. The parents can have confidence in the pre-school centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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