



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

The Little Castle Community Playgroup Lisnaskea

Inspected: November 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	The Little Castle Community Playgroup
Address:	11 Water Street LISNASKEA Co Fermanagh BT92 0LZ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	14 November 2007
Date of previous inspection:	28 January 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	18	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	13	-
• funded by Department of Education	13	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
• 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	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	81%	-

* 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	2	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	1
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	3
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	-	180

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned:	71%
Number of written comments:	3

THE LITTLE CASTLE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, LISNASKEA, CO FERMANAGH, BT92 0LZ (2AB-0451)

1. The centre is situated in purpose built accommodation within the Leisure Centre Complex, in the town of Lisnaskea. The previous inspection was in 2002 and within the current academic year a new staff has been appointed to posts of responsibility.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. There was a high level of praise and satisfaction for the work of the staff by the parents. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and indicate the development of positive working arrangements.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the centre has a few strengths. There are, however, important areas for improvement which require prompt action to ensure that the policies and procedures are in line with the guidance outlined in relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars. In particular, the centre needs to update the staff training, review and develop further the policies in order to develop a shared understanding about the procedures to be followed and ensure that all the policies are shared with the parents. The District Inspector will return to the centre within a six-week period to ensure that these important issues are addressed appropriately.

4. The pre-school centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- There is a stimulating and attractive learning environment. The staff are caring and responsive to the needs of the children; they ensure the effective implementation of appropriate behaviour management strategies to encourage the children's good behaviour.
- The staff are effectively developing good relationships with the parents and encourage them to be involved in the life and work of the centre. There are effective links with the local community and educational visits to places of interest.
- There are some very good quality interactions between the staff and the children which are effectively supporting the development of the children's language and learning.
- There are good opportunities for the children to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's mathematical awareness and the promotion of their environmental appreciation through recycling, respect and protection of living things enrich their learning.

- There is excellent advice, guidance and support provided by the early years specialist (EYS) which is clearly focused on the areas of improvement required by the centre. The management group are supportive and encouraging of the pre-school centre.
- There is a positive team-working approach developing among the newly formed staff. The leader is a good administrator and displays commitment to the further development of good quality pre-school provision. The staff are energetic, hard-working and supportive of the development of the pre-school centre.

6. The staff are at an early stage of self-evaluation. They have focused on building a team culture and implementing the advice, guidance and support provided by the EYS. There is evidence that the quality of work, over a short period of time, in setting up a well-organised pre-school centre is good and that the staff are well placed to bring about further improvements; for example, through the identification and sharing of good practice among the staff. The EYS has made an excellent contribution to the overall development of the provision in this pre-school centre. The support provided is well focused and matches effectively the needs of the centre.

7. The inspection has identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas in need of attention.

- The planning and assessment methods need to be developed further in order to ensure that there is progression and challenge throughout the year to meet the children's individual needs.
- The child protection policies need to be reviewed and a shared understanding of the procedures developed among the staff, the management group and the parents.

8. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational 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.

APPENDIX

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Parts of the perimeter wall are in an unstable condition and the boundary of the outdoor play area needs to be fully secured.
- During the inspection, there was a piece of wood in the outdoor area with protruding nails which was a potential hazard to the children.
- The staff need to ensure that all the resources are age appropriate and meet fully the Health and Safety Standards.

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