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*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

Tiny Tots Centre
Monkstown, Newtownabbey

Inspected: November 2006

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Name of pre-school centre: | Tiny Tots Centre |
| Address: | Monkstown Community Centre Cashel Drive NEWTOWNABBEY Co Antrim BT37 0EY |
| Management Type: | Voluntary |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Date of inspection: | 27 November 2006 |
| Date of previous inspection: | 30 November 2000 |

1. Details of Children

| Total number of children: | am session | pm session |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| • attending the pre-school centre | 23 | - |
| • in their immediate pre-school year | 10 | - |
| • funded by Department of Education | 14 | - |
| • qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2 | 4 | - |
| • 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: | | |
| • percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year | 85% | - |

* 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 | - | 186 |

4. Parental Questionnaires

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Number issued to parents: | 25 |
| Percentage returned: | 32% |
| Number of written comments: | 3 |

TINY TOTS CENTRE, MONKSTOWN, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT37 0EY (3AB-0255)

1. Tiny Tots Centre is accommodated in a local community hall which is shared with other organisations. Since the last inspection, the centre has received a second accreditation from NIPPA The Early Years Organisation and they have purchased new resources.

2. The centre is currently piloting approaches aimed at building on the principles and practices associated with early years education in Reggio Emilia. The key focus of the work to date is a major review of the planning and assessment methods and the trialling of new approaches. The staff are being trained and supported in this work by an early years specialist from NIPPA.

3. 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. The parents who responded indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision.

4. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively to safeguard the children.

5. The pre-school gives consideration to promoting a healthy lifestyle among the children. There are some opportunities for the children to participate in a range of physical activities. These are restricted by the lack of available space both indoors and outdoors.

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

- There is a happy, settled atmosphere based on the caring and supportive relationships between the staff and the children. The children are well behaved and show respect for the equipment and each other.
- The staff work very hard to set up an attractive learning environment with distinct areas for play. The equipment has to be set up and cleared away on a daily basis. The room is enhanced with topical displays and examples of the children's own art work.
- There is a smooth flow to the daily timetable. The children have an extended period of free play when they make independent choices and some sustain high levels of concentrated and co-operative play.
- The staff are sensitive and supportive in their engagement with the children. They listen to the children and promote purposeful play. At times, they extend the children's ideas and they manage the group situations appropriately.
- The children have access to a wide range of activities which give some opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children demonstrate good social skills and high levels of independence. The attractive book area is used effectively to read informal and group stories and a number of children are showing a strong interest in early marking and writing. On the day of

the inspection, children spent sustained periods of play exploring and using the junk art, making patterns in the sand and transporting blocks at the floor play.

- There is a strong sense of team-work among the long established staff and a willingness to try new ideas.

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

- The staff interaction needs to be more effective in promoting a wider range of learning, problem-solving and thinking skills.
- The early years specialist needs to match more effectively the support being given to the requirements of the group in order to promote higher quality teaching and learning.
- The staff and the early years specialist need to have a clearer focus on the purpose and intended outcomes of the pilot project in which the group is engaged and the steps required to achieve these.

8. The staff have implemented some useful methods of self-evaluation to review and improve aspects of their routine and the layout of the room. This work should be built on further, with the help of the early years specialist, to improve aspects of the teaching and learning identified during the inspection. The development plan should be amended accordingly. The development of creativity is not reflected sufficiently in the practice evident during the inspection. The staff are currently reviewing their planning and assessment methods under the guidance of their early years specialist.

9. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- On the day of the inspection the outer entrance doors were left open by other adults using the building.

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