

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Tiny Tots Pre-School
Playgroup, Cookstown

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Tiny Tots Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	28 Dunamore Road COOKSTOWN Co Tyrone BT80 9NT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	26 April 2010
Date of previous inspection:	15 November 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	18	16
• in their immediate pre-school year	18	16
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	16
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	4	0
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
• with English as an additional language	0	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	83%	83%

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
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	2½ hours	186

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	34
Percentage returned:	79%
Number of written comments:	17

**TINY TOTS PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, COOKSTOWN, CO TYRONE, BT80 9NT
(5AB-0208)**

1. Tiny Tots Pre-school Playgroup is situated on the Dunamore Road, approximately eight miles from Cookstown. It is accommodated in a mobile classroom, which is due to be replaced in September 2010. The centre has an extensive, well-equipped outdoor play area.

2. Since the last inspection, the centre has established dual day provision and has appointed an additional member of staff; 18 children currently attend in the morning and 16 attend in the afternoon. A permanent early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) has been in post for approximately one year and provides support for the centre through bi-monthly visits; prior to her appointment, there was inconsistent support for the centre.

3. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

4. The children are all very well-settled; they are independent in their personal care and in their choice of activities; they make creative use of the resources, often transferring items from one play area to another. Most of the children engage in sustained periods of purposeful play, particularly in the role-play and the creative areas. They care for plants and seedlings, have a good understanding of the necessary conditions for plant growth and can name the parts of flowers.

5. The children communicate effectively with one another and with the staff; they participate well in songs and rhymes and are confident to talk about their play. Many of them recognise their name in print and most engage in purposeful mark-making. During the inspection, most of the children listened attentively at planned story time; however, they made little use of the wide range of interesting books on display throughout the playroom.

6. There is a warm, welcoming ethos within the centre; the staff know the children well and have worked hard to create a bright, attractive learning environment. They have provided a wide range of natural and manufactured resources to stimulate the children's interest and to foster their observation skills. There is a good balance between free play and adult-led activities; there is a need, however, for the staff to review the daily routine in order to provide the opportunity for a more extended period of outdoor play in both sessions. During the inspection, the quality of the staff interactions with the children was inconsistent; although there were some examples of very good interactions, for example during role play and at the craft table, there were many missed opportunities to build on the children's ideas and to challenge their thinking.

7. The staff plan conscientiously for each area of the pre-school curriculum and maintain extensive observations of the children's responses in most of these areas. Although the observations are analysed and used to identify and meet some of the children's individual needs, there is a need for them to be more specific, and for the staff to use them to assess more effectively the children's progress and to inform future planning.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. This is characterised by the very good care which the staff provide for the children and by the very good relationships at all levels.

9. The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department: one area for improvement is the need to maintain a written record of the parents' receipt of key policies and information.

10. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy lifestyles, for example through the continuous access to water and the provision of a healthy break. An area for improvement identified is the need to provide a longer period of time for energetic play.

11. The leader is enthusiastic and well motivated; she has led the staff in the recent review of key policies, such as the Child Protection policy, and of the centre's information booklet for parents. She effectively manages the daily routines and programmes and has been instrumental in securing funding for the centre's new accommodation. A useful plan has been drawn up to guide the centre's development.

12. The leader is very well supported by the dedicated staff who work well together as a team. Within the past year the centre has received consistent, well-focused support from the EYS, for example, in promoting understanding of the self evaluation process and the review of the centre's policies.

13. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty-seven of the parents (79%) responded to the questionnaire and 17 made additional written comments. Most of the parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision in the centre; in particular, they expressed appreciation of the caring, professional staff and of the nurturing ethos of the centre. The responses from the staff and management questionnaires were also highly supportive of the work of the centre. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

14. The key strengths in this pre-school centre include:

- the caring, well organised learning environment;
- the independent, very well-behaved children;
- the very good resources to support learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the good opportunities for the development of the children's creative, personal and social skills and their understanding of the world around them;
- the recently reviewed key policies; and
- the dedicated leader and staff.

15. The priorities identified for improvement are the need:

- to develop a more systematic approach to planning, assessment and recording, in order to make more effective use of the observations to assess the children's progress and to inform future planning; and
- to develop further the self-evaluation process in order to identify key priorities for improvement.

16. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The traffic congestion at drop off and pick up times poses a potential danger to the children. There is a need for a risk assessment to be carried out with regard to parking and traffic flow at peak times of the day.

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