

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Windmill Playgroup, Newry

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Windmill Playgroup
Address:	Well Lane Community Centre Well Lane High Street NEWRY Co Down BT34 1HE
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	15 April 2010
Date of previous inspection:	23 November 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	11	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	11	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	4	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
• with English as an additional language	2	-
• 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	80.6%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	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
3 hours	-	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	29.2%
Number of written comments:	4

WINDMILL PLAYGROUP, NEWRY, CO DOWN (5AB-0506)

1. Windmill Playgroup is located within the Well Lane Community Centre in Newry. The children come mainly from the surrounding area.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning 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 (ETI) will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. Almost all of the children demonstrate high levels of independence and autonomy in their personal care, decision-making and use of materials. Most of the children are very well settled and engage in periods of sustained and concentrated play across a wide range of activities, however, a minority of the children are less settled and their play, at times, can be disruptive for the other children. There are good opportunities provided for the children to develop their creative skills and many of the examples of the children's work on display show close attention to detail and are very good representations of people or objects in their environment. The children handle equipment and resources with confidence, and happily explore and investigate the different play areas available to them.

4. The children's language and communication skills are generally well developed. A majority of the children participate in imaginative role-play and nearly all communicate effectively with one another and the staff. Books are attractively presented throughout the centre and the children clearly enjoy the opportunities provided for independent and group story sessions when they are encouraged to listen attentively and join in at appropriate times. The children demonstrate a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes and participate willingly in impromptu music sessions with the staff.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff are caring and supportive in their interactions with the children and much emphasis is placed on promoting the children's language and learning through the play and daily routines. Aspects of the daily timetable, in particular the snack time and the physical play session, need to be reviewed to ensure that the differing needs of all the children are met and that the allocated time is used more effectively to promote learning. There are good relationships with the parents who are kept well informed about the programme available and the progress of their respective child.

6. The planning available indicates breadth and variety in the programme and progression in the activities; the staff have identified appropriately the need to refine and develop further aspects of their planning. The staff operate a key-worker system to monitor and record the children's development. Good use is made of photographic evidence to support their findings. The information gained should now be used to ensure a closer link between the observations of the children's responses to the activities and the planning for their future learning, and also to influence more effectively the strategies used by the staff in their work with the children.

7. The provision for pastoral care within the pre-school centre is satisfactory; while the staff are caring and attentive to the needs of the children they need to implement more effective behaviour management strategies for those children who display challenging behaviour.

8. The pre-school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The staff need to ensure that the procedures for the intimate care of the children are documented clearly and shared with the parents.

9. The pre-school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, through the provision of a daily healthy snack. There are currently no outdoor facilities available; however, the children have daily opportunities to promote their physical development in a section of the hall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10. The pre-school leader demonstrates a commitment to the future development of the centre and promotes a strong team-spirit among the hard-working staff. Through an ongoing process of self-evaluation and development planning, the staff have identified key areas for improvement and, to date, have implemented several positive changes to the provision. The early years specialist has supported the staff well in this aspect of their work.

11. 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. Seven of the parents responded to the questionnaire and four made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were highly affirmative of the provision and indicated that the parents appreciate the caring staff and the progress their children are making in their learning and development. The responses from the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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

- the friendly ethos and the very good working relationships between the staff and the parents;
- the attractively presented learning environment;
- the varied programme on offer and the good opportunities to promote, in particular, the children's language, creative skills and early mathematical awareness; and
- the hard-working and committed staff.

13. The priorities identified for improvement are the need to:

- implement more effective behaviour management strategies for the children who display challenging behaviour; and
- review aspects of the daily timetable to ensure that the differing needs of all the children are met and that the allocated time is used more effectively to promote learning.

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

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