

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Harbour Bears Pre-School,  
Larne

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2010

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Harbour Bears Pre-School
<b>Address:</b>	Curran Park Bowling Pavilion Curran Road LARNE Co Antrim BT40 1BS
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	18 October 2010
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	27 November 2003

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	28	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	17	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	17	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	91%	-

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	0	5
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	5
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: **</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
3 hours	-	185

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned:	47%
Number of written comments:	4

## **HARBOUR BEARS PRE-SCHOOL, LARNE, CO ANTRIM, BT40 1BS (3AB-0123)**

1. Harbour Bears Pre-School is situated in the Bowling Pavilion on the Curran Road in Larne; the children come from within a ten mile radius. Since the last inspection, a new deputy leader has been appointed.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school is very good. The pre-school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The majority of children make independent choices, are well settled, appear happy and are generally confident to ask for help and support. They are developing good levels of independence in their personal care, and they are familiar with the daily routines. During the inspection, the majority of children were observed playing collaboratively and imaginatively with sustained interest with water, dough, and in the hospital. A small number of the younger children are still quite dependent on the adults for support and guidance in developing their skills, selecting and persevering with their chosen activities.

4. The development of the children's language and communication skills is a key priority for the pre-school. The planned programme provides very good opportunities to enrich and extend the children's vocabulary through the addition of real and authentic materials in the areas of play. The staff have received training in the Hanen Language Development Programme; they engage in skilful discussion with the children, naturally extending and enriching the children's conversations around their play experiences and interests. The majority of children are developing their vocabulary, expressing their thoughts and ideas with increasing fluency. This support is extended further through the Larne Parental Support Project where a speech and language therapist is helping to provide support for a number of children who have been identified in need of more focused attention. The children have very good opportunities during their time in the pre-school to handle and explore a range of books and enjoy stories.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The staff demonstrate skilful involvement with the children in all areas of learning. During the inspection, the staff were observed promoting rich mathematical language, sensory awareness, and the children's imaginative skills. The children are already aware of the daily routines and transitions are organised smoothly. Books, reading materials, labels and text are incorporated appropriately throughout the playroom. It is timely that the staff plan to develop a story-sack lending library.

6. The staff have developed a sound system for planning an interesting and balanced programme for the children which they regularly evaluate; the children's ideas and comments are valued in the choice of topics and themes. The staff are also adopting a systematic approach to observing and recording the children's progress which is regularly shared with the parents. There is already evidence, at this early stage of the year, of the children making sound progress. The good relationships developed with the local primary school and the shared opportunities to work together ensure a smooth transition for the children transferring into year 1.

7. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the pre-school is very good. Among the strengths are the high level of care and support provided by the staff, and the efforts made most days by the staff to create an inviting, welcoming and child friendly environment for both the children and the parents.

8. The pre-school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

9. The pre-school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the healthy daily snacks, the continued efforts by the staff to increase the physical play opportunities outdoors, and the availability of water for the children throughout the session, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10. The leader is highly enthusiastic, motivated and provides effective leadership for the staff. She is an excellent role-model, is committed to continued professional development and sets high standards for herself and others. She and the staff have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of the provision, and to raise the profile of the pre-school within the local community.

11. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement including staff development, special educational needs, language development and the physical play experiences. The staff have developed an enclosed outdoor play area to improve the opportunities for, and the variety of physical play experiences for the children. There is clear evidence of self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement.

12. The staff report that they had a period of time last year with no focused support from their early years specialist employed by the Early Years Organisation.

13. The key strengths of the pre-school centre include:

- the progress made to date, by the children in their personal, social and emotional development, communication and language skills and their mathematical language and thinking;
- the very good quality of the staff interaction in promoting the children's care, learning and development and the very good provision for those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- the smooth transitions between the different activities and the balance of adult-led and child-centred activities;
- the excellent links developed between the parents, the local primary school and the health agencies within the local community;
- the priority given to the continual professional development of the staff and the centre; and
- the highly effective leadership supported by the hard work and committed staff and the positive team approach to continuous improvement.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school is very good. The pre-school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

- 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. Eight of the parents responded to the questionnaire and four made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents praised the standard of care and dedication of the staff, the provision and progress made by the children including those with special educational needs. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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