

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bosco Community Playgroup,
Cookstown

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of playgroup centre:	Bosco Community Playgroup
Address:	19 Loy Street COOKSTOWN Co Tyrone BT80 8PZ
Management Type:	Voluntary
Date of inspection:	28 March 2012
Date of previous inspection:	7 February 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the playgroup centre	24	-
in their immediate playgroup year	24	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
with English as an additional language	9	-
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	80.28%	-

* 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	
Trainees	

*** 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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned	54%
Number of written comments:	5

BOSCO COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, COOKSTOWN, CO TYRONE, BT80 8PZ (5AB-0324)

1. Bosco Community Playgroup is located within the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, which is situated on Loy Street, Cookstown. At the time of the inspection, there were 24 children enrolled in the playgroup. All of the children are in their immediate pre-school year and nine are newcomer children for whom English is their second language. Since the last inspection in 2005, the playroom has been renovated extensively and extended to include a small quiet room; the playroom also has access to an additional outdoor play area.

2. In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this pre-school playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in learning and teaching which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the playgroup's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. Almost all of the children are well-settled; they know the playroom routines, can choose their resources and learning activities independently and make full use of all of the space available, transferring resources confidently from one play area to another. They are developing good self-management skills, for example, in their personal care, and are beginning to take responsibility for the care of the resources and playroom environment. During the inspection most of the children played together co-operatively and engaged in appropriate periods of sustained, purposeful play, for example, in the construction, jigsaw and outdoor play areas. The newcomer children are well-integrated into all aspects of the playgroup's provision and most of them are making appropriate progress in their learning; a small number of these children require specific support with aspects of their speech and language development to enable them to benefit further from the planned learning programmes.

4. Most of the children express themselves articulately; they are confident in asking and responding to questions, listen purposefully to each other during play and can join in a wide range of songs and rhymes. They can identify their own symbol and that of their peers and a significant number of them can recognise their name in print. A few of the children can write their name independently. The staff should encourage the children to use these skills further in labelling their artwork and creative models. There is an attractive range of books displayed throughout the playroom; during the inspection, a few of the children made use of these books for reference and to engage in incidental story 'reading' for each other. A majority of the children engaged enthusiastically in early mark-making in the outdoor play area. Their interest and skill in 'writing' should be encouraged further through its more natural integration across the planned learning activities. The staff have developed good links with the local Sure Start speech and language service and is implementing, to reasonable effect, the agreed strategies to support the newcomer children and those children experiencing difficulties with aspects of their language development.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There is a warm, welcoming ethos within the playgroup; the staff know the children well and are attentive to their personal needs; they have created an attractive and stimulating learning environment for the children and they make effective use of wall displays to record the children's learning, to celebrate their achievements and to support,

appropriately, the development of their understanding of print. The routines are planned carefully to ensure a good balance between free play and adult directed activities and to make optimum use of all the time available for learning.

6. There are good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's observation skills and their understanding of the natural world are particular strengths of the provision. During the inspection, the quality of the adult interactions with the children during play was consistently good; the staff responded effectively to the children's interests, built on their ideas and, in most instances, engaged purposefully in the play activities using skilful questioning to extend the children's learning.

7. The playgroup is, appropriately, focusing on the development of its links with the parents. The parents are kept informed about important dates and events in the playgroup through a monthly newsletter. They receive well-focused information from the staff about their child's achievements through a progress meeting and a short written report in term 1, a progress meeting in term 2 and the written transitional report at the end of term 3. This good practice should be developed further to ensure that the parents are provided with more information about how they can support their children's learning at home.

8. The playgroup has satisfactory links with the schools to which the children transfer. It will be important for the staff to develop these links further in order to ensure more adequate transfer of information about each child's stage of development and to ensure consistent progression in their learning as they enter the formal phase of their education.

9. The staff have recently reviewed their short-term planning procedures and have been successful in developing a format which provides them with appropriately detailed information to guide their day-to-day work with the children. They evaluate the children's responses to the planned learning activities on a daily basis and amend the planning accordingly to take account of the children's changing interests and needs. They have identified, appropriately, the need to develop further the observation and assessment procedures to better inform the planning for individual children.

10. The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is good. This is evidenced through the caring learning environment and through the very good working relationships at all levels.

11. The playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

12. The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy lifestyles through, for example, the provision of a healthy break and by encouraging good hygiene practices.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

13. The leader and staff are hard-working and committed to the continued development of the playgroup to meet the needs of all of the children. They work well together as a team, each fulfilling their designated roles conscientiously to ensure the smooth and effective day-to-day provision for the children.

14. The staff have made a good start to developing the procedures for self-evaluation to promote improvement in the quality of provision within the playgroup. It will be important for these procedures to be developed further and for the development plan and associated action plans to detail more specifically the actions which will lead to the required improvement.

15. The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) has provided regular, well-focused support for the staff which has led to improvement in the quality of the short term planning for learning.

16. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the warm, welcoming ethos and the effective inclusion of the newcomer children;
- the independent, well-settled children, most of whom play co-operatively together;
- the good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the consistently good quality adult interactions with the children; ;
- the good balance between free-play and adult directed activities; and
- the committed, hard-working leader and staff team.

17. A priority identified for improvement is the need to:

- make better use of the observations and assessments to inform the planning for individual children.

18. In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this pre-school playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in learning and teaching which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Thirteen of the parents (54%) responded to the questionnaire and five made an additional written comment. The responses from the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the playgroup's provision; in particular, the parents expressed their appreciation of the approachable, very helpful staff and the regular information which they receive about important dates and events in the playgroup. 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 playgroup.

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