

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Brownlee Playgroup by Little  
Rays, Lambeg, Lisburn

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2012



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Brownlee Playgroup by Little Rays
<b>Address:</b>	c/o Brownlee Primary School Wallace Avenue LISBURN Co Antrim BT27 4AA
<b>Management Type:</b>	Private

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	14 November 2012
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	N/A

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	16	16
in their immediate pre-school year	16	16
funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	16
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	2	1
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	1
with English as an additional language	0	4
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
<b>Attendance:</b>		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	94%	90%

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

\*\* 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	2	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
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>
2½ hours	2½ hours	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	32
Percentage returned	31%
Number of written comments:	6

## 1. Introduction

Brownlee Playgroup by Little Rays is situated in purpose-built mobile accommodation located in the grounds of Brownlee Primary School, Lisburn. The playgroup opened in September 2011; it operates a morning and afternoon session and is managed by the private company of Little Rays, Dunmurry. At the time of the inspection, an acting-leader and two temporary assistants were in charge of the playroom.

## 2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school.

The views of the parents, staff, and manager were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Thirty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents and ten were returned with six written comments. The majority of the responses indicated a good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, they appreciated the approachable and caring staff and they valued the good range of play activities provided for the children. Two staff responded to the questionnaires; all were very positive and emphasised the dedication of the staff. The reporting inspector discussed the matters raised through the questionnaires with the acting-leader and the manager who attended the oral report back.

## 3. Overall finding of the inspection

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the playgroup is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Satisfactory Inadequate Inadequate
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### KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

## 4. Children's Achievements

**The quality of the children's achievements is satisfactory.**

- Most of the children settled quickly and become well-engaged with the activities provided. They engage in purposeful play and sustain good levels of concentration and a few of them are beginning to work together collaboratively. The children displayed satisfactory levels of independence while accessing and tidying resources and self-registering.

- The children display good listening skills during the story session and explore information books during their play. Satisfactory opportunities were available for children to engage in early mark making and writing.

## 5. Provision for Learning

### **The quality of the provision for learning is inadequate.**

- The staff provide a range of opportunities for learning across most of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. Their interactions with the children are consistently of a good quality; in particular, the children's early mathematical language is developed appropriately during role play, greeting-time and snack time.
- There is a lack of a systematic approach to planning a programme that outlines a broad, and balanced pre-school curriculum for the children. There is a need for a yearly overview of the key objectives of the curriculum to ensure that there is adequate challenge and progression in the children's learning opportunities throughout the year. The monthly, thematic planning and the weekly planning requires the identification of specific and progressive learning objectives, the appropriate development of the adult role and creative use of the resources. The evaluations of all children's learning through observations and the assessment process need to be an integral part of the planning process.
- The provision for pastoral care within the playgroup is good. There are positive working relationships at all levels; the children are well-behaved and respond well to their peers. The staff use praise appropriately to build the children's confidence, self esteem and risk-taking dispositions.
- The playgroup gives satisfactory attention to developing healthy eating, for example, through the provision of a fruit break and healthy drinks. The area for improvement includes the need to plan for, and implement, a skills-based outdoor, physical play programme.

## 6. Leadership and Management

### **The quality of leadership and management is inadequate.**

- The independent early years specialist (EYS) has given appropriate advice to the staff regarding the necessary areas for development since the opening of the playgroup. It is now important that the manager maintains a strategic overview regarding the sustained implementation of the training and to facilitate the necessary support by the EYS to enable the staff to improve the quality of the provision.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

In particular, the manager and staff members need:

- to update the training in safeguarding/ child protection to enable the playgroup's staff to fulfil the designated and deputy designated officer roles;

- to have in place procedures which implement rigorously the guidance outlined in the relevant Department's circulars;
- to maintain appropriate records in accordance with the issued guidance; and
- to share the updated practices and policies with the parents.

The District Inspector will return within six weeks of this inspection to monitor the progress relating to the safeguarding matters.

## CONCLUSION

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the playgroup is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

### **The areas for improvement include the need:**

- to develop the planning and the use made of the evaluations and the observations in order to best meet the needs of individual children and to achieve progression in the children's learning;
- to ensure there are appropriate policies and rigorous procedures in place for safeguarding the children; and
- to develop a consistent staff development programme that progresses the staff's professional skills and expertise to implement self-evaluative practice and to deliver a high quality pre-school provision.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.



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