

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Chapel Road Community
Playgroup, Derry

Report of an Inspection
in January 2011

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Chapel Road Community Playgroup
Address:	Knockdara Park DERRY BT47 2BD
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	17 January 2011
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	23	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	23	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	23	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	11	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	3	-
• with English as an additional language	3	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
• percentage attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	90.8%	-

* 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	1
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	-	185

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	23
Percentage returned:	30.4%
Number of written comments:	2

CHAPEL ROAD COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, DERRY, BT47 2BD (2BB-0565)

1. The Chapel Road Community Playgroup provides one part-time session for pre-school-age children who come mostly from the immediate area. The playgroup operates within a classroom in Chapel Road Primary School. The children have access to the school's assembly hall and an enclosed outdoor area. The playgroup is in its third year of participating in the Pre-school Expansion Programme.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. During the inspection, most of the children displayed a keen interest in the range of activities on offer and demonstrated a good level of independence in their personal hygiene; they are familiar with the daily routines and their social skills are developing appropriately. The children handle equipment and resources with confidence and happily explore and investigate the different play areas available to them. The children were often observed in purposeful play and most were able to sustain good levels of concentration in their chosen activities when provided with adequate time; the staff needs to review the organisation of the daily session to provide longer periods of free-play.

4. The children appear happy and at ease with the staff. While most of the children are generally well-settled, the behaviour of a few children is challenging at times; the staff need to agree and implement more appropriate behaviour management strategies when such incidents occur.

5. The staff uses appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play; as a result, many of the children show an interest in counting, matching and making comparisons. The children participate enthusiastically in singing songs and rhymes. Almost all of the children are beginning in their art work, to make simple representations of people and objects in their environment. Increased opportunities need to be provided for the children to use more imaginatively a wider range of creative materials.

6. Nearly all of the children communicate effectively with one another and the staff. Although the majority of children listen attentively during group story time, a minority of the children would benefit from the opportunity to take part in small group sessions, which more appropriately match their stage of development and their level of English as an additional language. The staff displays reference books across all areas of play to provide new ideas and extend the children's vocabulary; during the inspection, individuals and small groups of children were observed browsing through these books.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the centre and relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff members are dedicated and they work very well as a team in the best interests of the children. During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in natural discussions about their activities and experiences; they encouraged the children to observe, to think, to make choices and to extend their play.

8. The recent improvements to the play programme, following a recent monitoring inspection visit, have had a beneficial impact on the quality of the provision. The staff has worked to create distinct areas of play within the playroom and in the outdoor play space. On the day of the inspection, an interesting range of well-resourced activities was available to the children. The secure environment outdoors and access to the school's hall provide good opportunities for a wider range of play activities. A useful start has been made to planning the educational programme; the range of topics and themes, activities and resources to be used throughout the year, has been identified. There is a need to increase the opportunities the children have to experience activities related to the World Around Us (WAU) and to provide a much wider range of creative and expressive activities.

9. The staff know the children very well and has begun to operate a key-worker system to monitor and record the children's development. In order to develop the planning further, greater emphasis needs to be given to identifying the inherent learning to be promoted in the planned activities; the information gained through the observation of the children needs to be used to adapt activities to take account of the children's differing needs.

10. There are good daily working relationships with parents. The staff has identified appropriately, that the links with parents now need to be strengthened to include a more systematic approach to sharing information about their children's progress and information about the playgroup's programme, and to encourage the parents to become more fully involved in their children's education. Links with the primary school in which the playgroup is situated, have been improved during the last year through the collaborative working and planning of the playgroup staff and the school's foundation stage teachers. The school and playgroup staff report that these joint endeavours have resulted in the children from both the playgroup and the classes in the foundation stage, having weekly opportunities to share resources, play together and benefit from the support of a wider range of adults.

11. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. The staff treats the children with care and respect and provides a secure and supportive environment, which is helping the children to grow in confidence, independence and to develop consideration for the needs and wishes of others.

12. The centre has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued from the relevant Department.

13. The pre-school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of a fruit break and the regular opportunities provided for energetic play, all of which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

14. The leader and all the staff display commitment to the children and the work of the playgroup. The leader, early years specialist (EYS) from the primary school and the staff have worked collaboratively to address successfully the main areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous Inspectorate visit to the playgroup. It will be important that this impetus for change to continue in order to bring about the required further developments for this playgroup outlined in this inspection report.

15. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the happy and generally well-settled children;
- the good relationships between the staff and the children;

- the developing links with the primary school;
- the hard-working staff and sense of collegiality within the team; and
- the commitment of the staff to bring about improvement in the quality of provision.

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

- review aspects of the daily timetable, routines and the use of different play areas to ensure that all time and space is used more effectively to promote learning and support concentrated play;
- increase the opportunities the children have to experience activities related to the WAU and develop a much wider range of creative and expressive activities; and
- develop further the written planning and focus more on the learning to be promoted in the activities provided.

17. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

QUESTIONNAIRES

- The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the members of the management committee and the staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Seven of the parents responded to their questionnaire, indicating that they are very pleased with the quality of the overall provision within the centre; two parents also included a written comment. The responses from the parents show that they are appreciative of the care and dedication shown by the staff to their children. The responses from the staff and management committee were also highly supportive of the work of the playgroup. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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