

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup,
Mowhan, Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in January 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup
Address:	88 Cladymore Road Mowhan ARMAGH BT60 2EP
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	26 January 2011
Date of previous inspection:	23 May 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	18	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
• 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	3	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• 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	87%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	4
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	2

Number of: **	
Students	0
Trainees	1

** 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	-	189

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	18
Percentage returned:	61%
Number of written comments:	4

CLADY TINY TOTS PLAYGROUP, MOWHAN, ARMAGH, BT60 2EP (5AB-0399)

1. Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup is situated off the Cladymore Road, approximately four miles from Markethill, County Armagh. Since the last inspection, two new members of staff have been appointed, the leader has completed additional training in early childhood studies and the pre-school centre has adopted the Highscope approach to early years education. A new early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) has been assigned to the centre.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup 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 children enrol in the playgroup immediately following their third birthday; there is, therefore, a natural variation in their levels of maturity and independence. Most of the children are confident, highly motivated and respond very positively to the adults' high expectations. They contribute enthusiastically to planning and small group activities; they follow confidently the visual planning prompts and make independent choices about their learning activities and resources. Most of the children are becoming aware of the needs and interests of other children and are developing very good turn-taking skills. During the inspection, there were many examples of sustained, purposeful play.

4. The development of the children's language and communication skills is a key strength of the playgroup's provision. Most of the children express their ideas and opinions confidently and are keen to talk about their play; they listen attentively to the adults and to each other and willingly ask and respond to questions posed by the adults. They can recall a wide range of songs and rhymes and demonstrate a growing interest in books and 'reading' for enjoyment; many of them are beginning to engage in early mark making as a natural part of their play. Individual education plans (IEPs) have been developed for a small number of the children who are experiencing speech and language difficulties; the targets are generally well focused and are reviewed regularly, in consultation with the parents and appropriate external support agencies. The review records indicate that the children are making good progress.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There is a warm, welcoming ethos which promotes the children's confidence and self esteem; the staff take very good account of those children who are newly enrolled in the centre, providing them with the necessary time and support to help them to integrate with their peers and to adapt to their new learning environment. The playroom is presented attractively in clearly defined areas of play; the resources reflect the children's interests and are easily accessible to them. The children's creative achievements are celebrated and used effectively to capture the children's thoughts and to record their progress. Natural resources are used effectively to stimulate the children's interest, to foster their sense of enquiry and to enhance their understanding of the world around them. The daily session is well-organised with the purposeful use of all of the time available for learning. There are very good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.

6. The adults' interactions with the children are consistently of a very good quality. The staff value the children's opinions; they engage meaningfully in the play activities and make effective use of role-play and small group activities to model desired behaviours and to extend the children's vocabulary; they encourage the children to take responsibility for their actions and guide them skilfully in resolving conflicts with their peers. The adults implement agreed behaviour management strategies consistently and effectively to support a small number of children who demonstrate challenging behaviour.

7. The playgroup is in a period of transition in relation to their planning, observation and assessment procedures. The staff plan the learning programmes conscientiously; they engage daily in reflective discussion about individual children's learning, progress and needs and amend the provision accordingly. There is a need for the written planning to reflect more accurately the quality of their professional discussions and the action they take to meet the children's needs. The observations are used effectively to assess the children's levels of achievement across the pre-school curriculum. However, the current recording format needs to be reviewed to enable the staff to record the children's identified needs in more detail and to inform the subsequent written planning.

8. There are very good pastoral links with the parents and with the main primary schools to which the children transfer. The parents are informed about the playgroup's work and routines through a pre-enrolment information booklet and induction meeting; they also receive monthly newsletters which detail important forthcoming dates and events. It will be important for the staff to consider the curriculum content of the newsletter and information booklet in order to further assist the parents in supporting their children's learning. The parents are provided with well-focused information about their child's progress through a termly meeting and written report. The staff have, appropriately, identified the need to develop further the curricular links with the primary schools in order to ensure consistency and progression in the children's learning.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. This is evidenced through the very good working relationships at all levels and through the emphasis on the development of the children's personal and social skills.

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

11. The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the healthy snack routines and the regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader is a very good role-model in all aspects of the centre's provision; she is well-organised, enthusiastic and committed to the continued development of the playgroup. She is supported very effectively by the hard-working staff team who share her eagerness and dedication.

13. Reflection and self-evaluation to promote improvement form an integral part of the staff's practice. They use a variety of self-evaluation strategies, including regular consultation with parents, to identify a range of appropriate priorities for development. These are detailed within the playgroup's plan for development over the next three years. During the inspection, there was evidence that the recent review of routines has led to improvement in the quality of provision for the children.

14. The EYS from the EYO has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this playgroup. The support provided has been well focused, particularly in respect of the cluster group meetings.

15. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the confident, highly motivated children;
- the very good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the effective promotion of the children's language and communication skills;
- the effective procedures for self-evaluation to promote improvement;
- the consistently high quality adult interactions with the children; and
- the very effective leader and dedicated staff team.

16. The areas for improvement include:

- the need for the written planning to reflect more accurately the quality of the provision for the children.

17. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup 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. Eleven of the parents (61%) responded to the questionnaire and four made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents appreciated the nurturing learning environment and the approachable, caring staff. The responses from the staff questionnaires and from most of the management group were very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the pre-school centre.

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