

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Greengables Playgroup,  
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2012



## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Greengables Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Carrickfergus Central Primary School Thomas Street CARRICKFERGUS Co Antrim BT38 8AL
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	9 May 2012
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	26 January 2005

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school centre	24	-
in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
funded by Department of Education	24	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	-
with a statement of SEN*	1	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	0	-
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	89%	-

\* Special Educational Needs

\*\* 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	4
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	1
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>
2¾ hours	-	188

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	70.8%
Number of written comments:	10

## **GREENGABLES PLAYGROUP, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 8AL (3BB-0086)**

1. Greengables Playgroup operates within two classrooms in Carrickfergus Central Primary School. Since the last inspection, the staff have introduced a second playroom for the children in their penultimate pre-school year.

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. 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 the space available both indoors and outdoors. They also demonstrate good self-management skills as they organise their own snack routine. Almost all of the children were engaged in purposeful and productive play throughout the session. The children were observed playing co-operatively often for sustained periods for example, in the construction area, water play, the train station kiosk and in the outdoor areas. They were very enthusiastic in the activities provided by the adults around the theme of 'Transport'; this was evident in their block-play with their imaginative play of preparing for a train journey, and in the conversations they had with the staff around the different forms of transport following a recent visit to the zoo.

4. The majority of the children are confident to ask and respond to questions, and to ensure their daily routines are carried out properly. They can join in a wide range of songs and rhymes and listen attentively during 'show and tell'. A few of the children were observed listening to their favourite stories and rhymes at the listening centre. A few of the children used the books provided for reference; most can identify and recognise their name in print. The staff recognise the need to encourage the children to develop their skills further through extending their early writing experiences. A small number of the children require more specific support with aspects of their speech and language development to enable them to benefit further from the planned learning programme.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The attractively presented and well organised playroom provides good opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. There is a warm welcoming ethos within the playgroup and effective use is made of wall displays to record the children's learning and to celebrate their achievements and current learning experiences. During the inspection, there were very good examples of skilful interaction by the adults which extended the children's language and thinking skills and also promoted their development of mathematical language, and problem solving skills.

6. The staff have effective systems in place to plan the programme for the children. The short-term planning provides them with appropriately detailed information to guide the day-to-day work with the children. They evaluate the children's responses to the planned activities and these in turn have begun to inform the future planning and ensure that it takes account of the children's needs and interests. The staff now need to focus more closely on providing greater challenge for the more able children and those returning to the playgroup for a second year.

7. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the playgroup is very good. The atmosphere is welcoming and caring. The staff have established very good pastoral links with the parents, the local feeder primary schools and the local nursery school.

8. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

9. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, the children have access to healthy snacks and regular opportunities for physical activities.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10. The leader who is also the playgroup's independent early years specialist has a clear vision for the development of the playgroup and has drawn up an appropriate development plan which outlines realistic targets. This includes the development of an enclosed outdoor play area to improve the opportunities for, and the variety of physical play experiences for the children and the addition of a second playroom for the younger children. There is clear evidence of self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement. The leader is a very good role model for the staff and has a very dedicated team who have a shared approach for the development of the playgroup.

11. The key strengths of this playgroup include:

- the caring and inclusive ethos based on excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the progress made to date by the children in their physical, personal, social, emotional development, their language related to the world around us and their early mathematical development;
- the very good quality of staff interactions with the children which promote the children's care and learning;
- the well-settled, secure and happy children;
- the recent developments to the outdoor learning environment and the addition of a second playroom; and
- the highly effective leadership and management provided by the playgroup leader and the dedicated team approach to continuous improvement.

12. 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. Seventeen of the parents responded to the questionnaires and ten made additional written comments.

The responses from the parental questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with many aspects of the playgroup's work; in particular, the parents praised the committed and dedicated staff for their support of the happy and settled children who are making progress with aspects of their development. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and the management of the playgroup.

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