

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kilroot Playgroup, Eden,
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Kilroot Playgroup
Address:	PO Box 61 Edenvale Avenue Eden CARRICKFERGUS Co Antrim BT38 7YL
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	5 March 2012
Date of previous inspection:	10 February 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	21	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	11	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	11	-
• 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	4	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• 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	86%	-

* 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	0
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	-	186

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	23
Percentage returned:	13.04%
Number of written comments:	2

KILROOT PLAYGROUP, EDEN, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 7YL (3AB-0144)

1. Kilroot Playgroup is accommodated in mobile premises in Eden village on the outskirts of Carrickfergus. Since the last inspection, there have been changes in staffing including the appointment of a new leader and an assistant. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding area.

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 are very well settled and almost all engaged in sustained, purposeful and productive play throughout the session observed. They are eager to explore and make full use of the attractively presented indoor and outdoor learning environments and co-operate readily with the staff. The majority of the children demonstrate very good progress in their development for the time of year, for example, they display good levels of independence, consideration towards others and care for their environment.

4. The staff have created a language rich environment which promotes and extends the children's language development. Appropriate books and photographs are incorporated into areas of play and, on occasions during the inspection, the staff and children made reference to these. A majority of the children can talk confidently about their work and achievements. The children make good use of the attractive book area and enjoy group story sessions where they demonstrate good listening skills and join in the varied repertoire of rhymes and songs. Good opportunities are provided for the children to experiment with mark making and early writing and much of the art work produced by the children is representational and of a high quality.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The attractively presented and well organised playroom provides very good opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The adult interactions with the children are consistently of a very high quality; the staff frequently ask open-ended questions and extend the children language and learning by providing them with new vocabulary and ideas. During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in valuable discussion about their play and experiences, and participated sensitively in many of the activities.

6. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable ensures a good balance between free play and activities organised by the staff. Transitions between activities and routines are managed very well and as a result, the session flows smoothly and all the time is used effectively for learning.

7. The children have daily access to a small enclosed outdoor space for physical play. Much thought is given to the planning of this area to ensure maximum use of the limited space, progression in the children's physical development and the promotion of safe play.

8. The staff meet regularly to plan an interesting and varied programme for the children based on themes and topics. Although the programme is regularly evaluated more account should be taken of the information gained to inform future learning. The children's learning and progress is carefully recorded by the staff and shared with the parents throughout the year. The staff have appropriately identified the need to establish a clearer link between the observations of the children's responses to the planned activities and the planning.

9. The playgroup provides very good support for those children identified with special educational needs. The children's needs are identified early and documented appropriately. Individual education plans have been developed to support the children and effective links established with the parents and other health professionals.

10. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The atmosphere is friendly and welcoming and is based on an ethos of mutual respect. Among the strengths of the playgroup are the very positive working relationships at all levels and the priority given to the children's well-being; the children appear happy confident and very well behaved.

11. The playgroup has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. The staff training for child protection needs to be updated.

12. The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the children have access to a healthy snack and they have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

13. The leader has a clear vision for the development of the playgroup and has drawn up a development plan which outlines appropriate targets. She is a very good role model for the staff who are all equally hard-working and demonstrate a caring approach to their work. A good start has been made in developing the process of self-evaluation.

14. Within the last year, the playgroup has employed the services of an independent early years specialist who has provided good support to date and identified appropriate areas for further development.

15. The key strengths of the playgroup include:

- the very positive ethos in the playgroup that contributes to high quality care and provision for the children;
- the very high quality of the interaction between the staff and the children;
- the very good support provided for the children identified with special educational needs;
- the thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable;
- the very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the preschool curriculum; and
- the very good leadership demonstrated by the leader and the hard-working staff who work very well as a team.

16. 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. The small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire made additional written comments; all of the returns indicate a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive; a small number of the responses indicated that more training opportunities would be beneficial. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

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