

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Pomeroy Pre-School Playgroup,
Dungannon

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Pomeroy Pre-School Playgroup
Address:	5 Cavanakeeran Road Pomeroy DUNGANNON Co Tyrone BT70 2RD
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	21 October 2010
Date of previous inspection:	4 December 2003

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	29	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	29	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	29	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	6	-
• 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	87%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	1
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	4	0
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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	28
Percentage returned:	93%
Number of written comments:	24

**POMEROY PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, DUNGANNON, CO TYRONE, BT70 2RD
(5AB-0206)**

1. Pomeroy Pre-School Playgroup is situated on the Cavanakeeran Road, Pomeroy. It is accommodated within an original National School building which has been refurbished to provide purpose-built pre-school facilities. It consists of a spacious playroom, a soft indoor play area and a large outdoor play area. Since the last inspection, the Management Committee has appointed an additional member of staff. At the time of the inspection, the centre had recently begun to receive support from a new early years specialist from The Early Years Organisation.

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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are well-settled, highly motivated and happy to talk about their learning activities. They contribute enthusiastically to planning and small group activities, take it in turn to act as the group leader and follow confidently the visual prompts and guidance on display, both indoors and in the outdoor play area. They make creative use of the learning resources, often transferring them from one area of play to another; they access and store the resources independently, demonstrating a growing sense of responsibility for the learning environment. They respond very positively to the staff's high expectations and play together co-operatively, taking increasing account of the needs and interests of others. 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 centre's provision. The staff make effective use of incidental conversation, commentary and explanation to model the use of language and to extend the children's vocabulary; rhymes and songs are integrated effectively into the play routines and activities to support the children's learning, to encourage them to speak clearly and to promote their confidence and self-esteem. Captions, labels and visual instructions are used very effectively to record the children's learning experiences and to promote the development of their early reading skills. Most of the children make good use of books, magazines and posters in the playroom and the outdoor area; they can identify their own symbols, can recall a wide range of songs and rhymes and listen attentively during story time; 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 staff have consulted appropriately with parents and external support agencies in formulating the IEPs and are endeavouring to secure additional external support to meet the children's needs.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The atmosphere in the centre is characterised by a sense of enjoyment and productivity; each of the play areas has been skilfully developed to capture the children's interests and to foster their creativity and imagination. The warm, respectful atmosphere promotes the children's self-esteem and helps them develop the confidence to try new experiences; the daily session is well organised with effective, purposeful use of all the time available for learning. It will be important, however, for the staff to review the daily routine in order to provide the opportunity for a more extended period of outdoor play. The adult interactions with the children are consistently of a very high quality; the staff engage meaningfully in the play activities; they value the children's opinions and build effectively on

their ideas; they make very effective use of the small group sessions to consolidate and extend the children's learning. There are very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; the development of the children's language and communication skills, of their understanding of early mathematical concepts and of the world around them are particular strengths of the provision.

6. The learning programmes are centred upon the children's interests. Through information gained from parents, as part of the induction programme, and through skilled, daily observation of the children at play, the key workers respond to the children's evolving interests and needs, introducing appropriate resources and language to sustain and build upon their interests and to ensure progression in their learning. The staff have recently reviewed the assessment and recording procedures; they are making effective use of their observations to assess the children's progress, to identify their individual needs and to inform their interactions with them.

7. There are very good links with the parents and with the main primary schools to which the children transfer; the year 1 teachers visit the centre in the third term to observe the children at play and to engage in the story time routines. The staff have developed a very useful Enrolment Information Booklet which parents complete for their child as part of the induction programme. The booklet contains contact details, family and medical information together with the parents' signed consent to agreed action in a range of circumstances. The parents are kept informed about events within the centre through the parents' information board and a newsletter; they receive information about their child's progress through informal meetings and through two written reports per year. The staff now need to consider the regularity and curriculum content of the newsletter, in order to further assist the parents in supporting their children's learning.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. This is evidenced through the staff's ongoing response to the children's interests and needs, through the promotion of safe play in the wider environment and through the excellent working relationships at all levels.

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

10. The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example through the provision of a healthy snack, and regular opportunities for energetic play in the soft indoor play area and in the outdoors which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. 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 ongoing development of the centre for the children and the community. Her very effective leadership and management is underpinned by highly effective teamwork and the excellent contribution made by the assistants.

12. Reflection and self-evaluation to promote improvement are key, integral elements of the staff's practice. During the inspection there was evidence that the recent review of the assessment and recording procedures and the review of the playroom lay-out have led to improvements in the provision for the children. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities for development over the current three year period.

13. The key strengths of the centre include:

- the confident, well-motivated children;
- the warm, respectful ethos and the very good working relationships at all levels;
- the very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the effective cycle of self-evaluation to promote improvement;
- the consistently high quality adult interactions with the children; and
- the very effective observation, assessment and recording procedures.

14. 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. Twenty-six of the parents (93%) responded to the questionnaire and twenty four made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were wholly positive and indicated a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work; in particular the parents expressed their appreciation of the helpful, caring staff, of the stimulating learning environment and of the staff's prompt identification of their children's developmental needs. The responses from the management group and the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the centre.

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