

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Pre-School Centre,
Omagh

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Inspection methods and evidence base	1
3.	Overall finding of the inspection	1
4.	Children's achievements	1
5.	Provision for learning	2
6.	Leadership and management	3
	Appendix - Accommodation	

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	St Brigid's Pre-School Centre
Address:	4 Lenagh Road Mountfield OMAGH Co Tyrone BT79 7PT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 November 2012
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	14	-
in their immediate pre-school year	13	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	13	-
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:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	90%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

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	3 hours	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned	35%
Number of written comments:	5

1. Introduction

St Brigid's Playgroup opened in September, 2011 and is situated in Mountfield, a rural village located between Omagh and Cookstown, Co Tyrone. The playgroup is located in surplus classroom accommodation at St Brigid's Primary School; it serves the needs of the children and the parents in the local and surrounding rural communities for pre-school education. In September 2012, it was over-subscribed by applicants for pre-school places. Five additional places were provided by the Western Education and Library Board's Pre-School Expansion Group to meet the needs of the parents for pre-school provision in their local area. The leader, early years specialist and chair of the management committee have been in post since the playgroup opened and are developing a model of provision that is an integral part of the primary school.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fourteen questionnaires were issued to the parents and nine were returned with five written comments. All of the staff and members of the management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the playgroup.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good; the playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children are well-settled on arrival to the playroom and have positive attitudes to learning; almost all sustain good quality play for lengthy periods of time.

- During the inspection, the children co-operated well with one another and with the adults; some of them are developing firm friendships. Most of the children are beginning to take good care of the materials, to tidy-up after their play and are able to self-manage at the snack table to pour their own drinks. The staff have identified this as an area to develop further to ensure progression in the learning across the pre-school year.
- The children listen well to the adults and to one another. They enjoy exploring and experimenting in the world around us activities. They have very well-developed fine motor skills and transfer these to a range of activities where they create 3D models, draw pictures and paint.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The positive relationships at all levels foster an inclusive and supportive family ethos throughout the playgroup. The staff are very caring, listen to the children and offers choice to them in play. They engage well with the children in their play activities. There are clear lines of communication established with the parents and outside agencies to highlight any identified concerns about child development.
- During the inspection, the staff were skilful in their interactions with the children and built effectively on the children's interest and ideas. In the longer-term, the staff need to develop further the planning and assessment methods to meet the individual developmental needs of a small number of the children. The staff have acquired training for a speech and language programme and it is appropriate to continue to embed the strategies acquired to address the identified language deficits.
- Since opening the new playgroup staff have worked hard to create a bright, and stimulating learning environment for the children. The children's work is celebrated and presented attractively in the playroom.
- An effective start has been made to developing a systematic approach to observing the children at play and recording their responses. The staff will require additional support from their early years specialist to develop further their understanding and approaches to planning and assessment in order to meet the differing needs of the children.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and regular physical activity. The snack is generally well-used to promote the children's independence and development and a few more opportunities can be developed further to promote links with learning new concepts. There are good opportunities to develop the children's energetic physical skills.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The leader is a good role model and has implemented a wide range of policies and procedures in the setting up of a new playgroup and development of an effective pre-school programme. The staff are developing well as a team. The staff have appropriately begun to evaluate the quality of their planning and to focus on assessment for learning. They need to continue to refine their self-evaluation processes and development planning to focus on the specific learning needs of the children and continue to action plan for ongoing improvement in the playgroup.
- The playgroup staff have the support of a well-qualified and effective early years specialist who is the principal of the primary school. She has a clear vision for sustainable education in a rural area, communicates well with the parents and has established sound links with a range of early years providers to create a playgroup at the school. Her well-focused advice to the playgroup staff has enabled them to create in a short period of time a broad range of child-centred learning experiences underpinned by a wide range of new policies and procedures to guide the management of the playgroup. The playgroup has a three year development plan and the EYS is supporting and monitoring effectively the ongoing improvement of the provision within the playgroup.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good; the playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the area for improvement.

The area for improvement is:

- the need for the staff to develop further the planning and assessment methods to meet the individual developmental needs of a small number of the children.

ACCOMMODATION

- The toilet provision outside of the playroom requires relocation to ensure that the most effective use of staff time is in learning rather than supervision beyond the playroom.

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