

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Playcentre at Manor Court,
Newtownards

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	The Playcentre at Manor Court
Address:	Manor Court Hall Mill Street NEWTOWNARDS Co Down BT23 4LT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	13 October 2010
Date of previous inspection:	29 April 2004

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	26	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	5	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
• 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	84%	-

* 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	1

Number of: **	
Students	2
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	-	186

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	46.2%
Number of written comments:	4

THE PLAYCENTRE AT MANOR COURT, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN, BT23 4LT (4AB-0147)

1. The Playcentre at Manor Court, Newtownards operates one part-time session for pre-school age children who come mostly from the immediate area.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this centre is very good. The centre 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 settle quickly to their chosen activity in the centre and they appear relaxed and happy. The standards of behaviour are excellent. The children relate well to each other, share toys and equipment readily and co-operate with one another. They demonstrate high levels of independence and concentration and are keen to talk about, and to show, what they are doing and what they have made.

4. The children engage well in imaginative play and are confident in using a range of both small and large tools and equipment. The children express their ideas well using a range of materials; their art work and creative activities are displayed attractively around the playroom. The staff encourage the children to develop an interest in books; the children pay close attention during story sessions and frequently browse in the book corner or explore an information book during their play. The children are introduced to text incidentally through the captions displayed around the room; many of the children show an interest in mark making, and the majority can recognise their own names. The staff use appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play; as a result, many of the children show an interest in counting, matching and making comparisons. The children participate enthusiastically in singing songs and rhymes; they explore and investigate a wide range of natural materials and demonstrate an interest in their environment.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the centre and relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff are hard-working and dedicated and they work very well as a team in the best interests of the children. They create a stimulating learning environment for the children, and through the consistently high quality of their interactions with the children, promote effectively the children's self-esteem, language and thinking.

6. The written planning outlines an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum for the children. The staff know the children very well and the adults collate comprehensive assessment information for each child. In order to develop the programme for the children further, the staff intend to link this high quality assessment information more overtly to their planning for future activities.

7. The communication with the parents is excellent. The centre provides the parents with clear information about the curriculum. In addition to the informal meetings which occur at the beginning and end of the day, the parents receive information regularly about their child's progress during the year. The centre also maintains very good links with the local primary schools.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. The strengths include the high priority given to the care, development and emotional well-being of the children, the parents and the staff and the effective ways of communicating with the parents.

9. The centre has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued from the Department of Education (DE).

10. The centre gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and life-styles including, for example, the provision of a fruit break and the regular opportunities for play outdoors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The dedicated and hard-working leader provides excellent leadership and management of the centre. She is enthusiastic and innovative in her approaches and is always willing to share ideas with others. The staff and members of the management committee work collaboratively, have a very strong team approach and share expertise; they are all fully committed to the best outcomes for the children and the families in the area.

12. There is a culture of reflection and self-evaluation in all aspects of the centre and clear evidence of continuous improvement. The planning for development, which is reviewed regularly, identifies appropriate priorities and actions to be taken.

13. The key strengths of the centre include:

- the very positive ethos which promotes excellent relationships at all levels;
- the appropriately challenging activities and the excellent opportunities provided for the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum which promote their independence and progression in their learning;
- the excellent behaviour of the children and their sustained engagement in their play;
- the detailed and comprehensive assessment information collated by the staff;
- the high level of skill and expertise of all of the staff in engaging the children in quality interactions; and
- the excellent leadership of the leader and the strong sense of collegiality within the team.

14. The area for further development is:

- the need to link the detailed observation notes more overtly to the weekly planning.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this centre is very good. The centre 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, the members of the management committee and the staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Approximately 46% of the parents responded to their questionnaire, indicating that they are very pleased with the quality of the overall provision within the centre; four parents also included a written comment. The responses from the parents show that they are appreciative of the care and dedication shown by the staff to their children. The responses from the management committee also fully endorse the work of the staff.

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