

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Twinkle Playgroup, Dungannon

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Twinkle Playgroup
Address:	Mullinahoe Road Ardboe DUNGANNON Co Tyrone BT71 5AT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	4 October 2010
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	22	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	22	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	22	-
• 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	0	-
• 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	97%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	0
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
2½ hours	-	189

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	22
Percentage returned:	36%
Number of written comments:	3

TWINKLE PLAYGROUP, ARDBOE, CO TYRONE, BT71 5AT (5BB-0199)

1. Twinkle Playgroup is situated in the grounds of St Patrick's Primary School, Ardboe; it is accommodated within a purpose-built mobile building with an adjoining outdoor play area. Since the last inspection, one new member of staff has been appointed.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school 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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are confident, highly motivated and show sustained interest in their play activities; they access and replace the learning resources independently and make creative use of all the available space in the playroom. They play together co-operatively, listen attentively and engage enthusiastically in discussions about their play; many of them collaborate effectively in pairs and small groups, demonstrating high levels of concentration.

4. The staff make skilful use of imaginative play to promote the development of the children's language and communication skills; they provide the children with opportunities to express their ideas and to ask and answer questions. The staff make effective use of photographs, labels and captions to celebrate the children's achievements, to reinforce their understanding of the playroom routines and to stimulate their interest in reading. The children make extensive use of books for reference and enjoyment, both in the playroom and in the outdoor area; they integrate mark making very naturally into much of their play. The staff work very effectively with the local SureStart speech and language therapist to identify, and provide support for, those children who are experiencing speech and language difficulties. The staff have been trained in the ELKLAN and Hanen language programmes; they apply agreed strategies consistently and appropriately in their day-to-day work with the children. Previous records indicate that detailed education plans are developed for the children; these plans are shared and regularly reviewed with the parents.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There is a warm, caring ethos which effectively promotes the children's confidence and self-esteem; the children's art work and models are displayed purposefully and attractively for their reference and information and to celebrate their creative achievements. Natural resources are effectively used by the staff to stimulate the children's interest and to provide opportunities for them to use their senses to explore, experiment and investigate the properties of materials. The adult interactions with the children are consistently of a very high quality; the staff value the children's opinions and build effectively on their ideas and interests; they use skilful questioning to stimulate the children's curiosity, to challenge their thinking and to encourage them to make and take responsibility for their decisions. 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 and their understanding of the world around them are particular strengths of the provision.

6. The staff's observations, evaluations and planning are skilfully integrated and of a very good quality; the planning clearly identifies the learning intentions, progression and challenge for the children and is amended appropriately in response to the children's interests and spontaneous play.

7. The parents are introduced to the centre through a well planned induction programme; they are kept well informed about the life and work of the centre and about their child's progress through the parents' information board, monthly newsletters and three formal reports per year. They are encouraged to express their views about all aspects of the centre's provision through an annual questionnaire and through in-year consultations, as the need arises. The centre has very good links with the primary school to which the children transfer; the staff have attended joint training in relation to the development of the children's language and communication skills and liaise effectively to ensure consistency and progression in the children's language development programmes.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. This is evidenced through the staff's knowledge of the children and through their effective interventions to promote the children's participation and sense of enjoyment.

9. The centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the 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 healthy snack routines, the personal and social development learning programme and the regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The Leader manages the centre very effectively. She is well-organised, enthusiastic and is committed to both the continued development of the centre and to the staff's ongoing professional development. The staff work very well together as a team; they are highly motivated, have a very good understanding of the pre-school curriculum and engage in ongoing reflection and evaluation of the quality of the provision for the children.

12. Professional discussion, consultation with the parents, regular review of the learning activities and assessment of the children's needs form the basis for the centre's ongoing self-evaluation to promote improvement. During the inspection there was evidence that the recent consultation with the parents about the centre's opening times has led to improvements in the provision for both the children and the parents. The Development Plan identifies appropriate priorities for development over the current three year period. The early years specialist, from the Early Years Organisation, has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in the centre. The support provided is well-focused, in particular, in respect of the assessment and recording procedures.

13. The key strengths of the centre include:

- the children's confidence, their ability to play co-operatively and their positive engagement in group discussions;
- the very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the outstanding provision for the development of the children's language and communication skills;
- the very good links with the parents and the local primary school;

- the consistently high quality adult interactions with the children; and
- the very effective leader and the reflective, hard-working staff team.

14. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school 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 and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Eight of the parents (36%) responded to the questionnaire and three made an additional written comment. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work. 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 pre-school centre.

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