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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Busy Bee Playgroup  
Maghera**

**Inspected: November 2007**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Busy Bee Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	The Mobile Unit Maghera Primary School 15 Station Road MAGHERA Co Londonderry BT46 5BS
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	20 November 2007
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	28 May 2002

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	13	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	11	-
• funded by Department of Education	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	0	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	99%	-

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

<b>Number of: **</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
2½ hours	-	189

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	13
Percentage returned:	69.2%
Number of written comments:	4

## **BUSY BEE PLAYGROUP, MAGHERA, CO LONDONDERRY, BT46 5BS (3AB-0359)**

1. The centre is situated in a mobile classroom within the grounds of Maghera Primary School. Since the last inspection a new staff team has been appointed.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. Those who responded indicated a high level of satisfaction with the overall provision of the centre. Some of the parents included written comments praising the work of the staff.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has a few strengths. Although some appropriate practice is in place, there are important areas for improvement which require prompt action. The pre-school centre's policies and procedures for child protection need to be reviewed and improved. In particular, action is needed to:

- review and update policies on anti-bullying and behaviour management; and
- develop clearer procedures for toileting and ensure that these are sufficiently understood and implemented by all of the staff;
- consult more fully with the parents during the review and development of these procedures; and
- ensure that all of the staff and members of the management committee receive appropriate training on child protection matters.

The District Inspector will return to the school within a six-week period to ensure that these important issues are addressed appropriately.

4. The centre's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has strengths, with a developing commitment to encourage the children to eat healthily and be physically active.

### **5. The following are the key findings within the centre's educational and pastoral provision.**

- The staff have worked hard to acquire new premises and much thought has been given to creating an attractive learning environment which is enhanced with some topical displays of the children's work and various items of good quality furniture and equipment.
- The children benefit from the extended period of free play during which they explore freely the full range of activities. The staff have introduced a daily group story. They need to develop further the learning experiences for the children at snack time including the promotion of the children's independence.
- The staff are caring and encouraging in their involvement with the children and they spend sustained periods with groups and individuals. During the inspection, there were a few instances when the staff asked open-ended questions. On most other occasions the interaction was overly directive and resulted in missed

opportunities for learning. All of the staff need to develop greater competence in recognising the potential of the various learning resources and in using effective strategies to promote language and learning.

- There are satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff need to develop further these activities in order to ensure that there is adequate challenge and progression for all of the children throughout the year.
- During the inspection, the staff used appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play and promoted an interest in counting, matching and making comparisons.
- There were a few examples of purposeful and co-operative play where the children displayed sustained interest. The staff need to exploit these opportunities better as they develop the programme throughout the year.
- There are a few opportunities for the children to express their own ideas through a range of artwork and for the children to enjoy group singing sessions and music-making.
- The children are developing fine motor skills through the use of small equipment such as paintbrushes and pencils. The staff have appropriately identified the physical play programme as an area for further development.
- The staff have introduced a few useful opportunities to promote the children's early marking and writing skills.

6. The staff have made a useful start in developing the written planning. It identifies relevant themes and topics and highlights aspects of the learning to be promoted. The staff need to continue to develop a shared understanding of how the children's learning will develop over the year. The management committee needs to ensure that the staff have more opportunities to work together to plan the programme.

7. The staff have introduced a key-worker system to observe and record the children's responses to play. They need to continue to develop their skill in recording and evaluating the children's learning. More effective strategies are required to support the needs of individual children.

8. The staff are developing useful links with the parents. Appropriate information on the curriculum and the children's progress is shared regularly through a detailed prospectus and monthly newsletters. In addition to the daily informal meetings, the parents are invited into the centre on three occasions throughout the year to discuss their children's progress. There is valuable co-operation with other educational professionals.

9. The leader is enthusiastic and has established good working relationships among the new team. She has managed effectively the move to the new premises and has overseen the transition and setting up of an inviting learning environment. There is evidence of significant improvements within the centre since the beginning of the academic year.

10. The staff, with the support of the early years specialist (EYS), have appropriately identified the priorities for further improvement and have drawn up a carefully structured development plan. It identifies clear roles and responsibilities and time scales. The inspection findings endorse these priorities. The EYS has made an excellent contribution to the overall development of the provision in this pre-school centre. The support provided is well focused and matches effectively the needs of the centre.

**11. The key strengths within the centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.**

- The happy and friendly children and the instances of purposeful and co-operative play.
- The supportive, encouraging and enthusiastic staff.
- The developing links with the parents and the local community.
- The satisfactory opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The excellent contribution and support provided by the EYS.
- The quality of the accommodation and the recent progress made in developing aspects of the overall provision.

**12. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention. The staff should continue to:**

- ensure that the child protection procedures are updated, understood by all of the staff and fully implemented;
- develop further the planning and assessment methods in order to ensure that the activities progress appropriately throughout the year, that the information gained through the observations of the play is linked to the planning and that the children's differing needs are met more effectively; and
- develop their skill in recognising and exploiting fully the learning inherent in the play activities and materials in order to promote effectively the children's language and thinking.

13. The centre has a few strengths in its educational provision. The inspection has identified important areas for improvement, which need to be addressed promptly if the centre is to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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