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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Dara Playgroup  
Armagh**

**Inspected: April 2009**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Dara Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	17A Drumarg Villas ARMAGH BT60 4AL
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	20 April 2009
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	1 June 2004

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	26	11
• in their immediate pre-school year	25	0
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	25	0
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	0
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
• with English as an additional language	0	0
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	88.11%	N/A

\* 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	4	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	4	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	1
Trainees	1

\*\*\* 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>
3½ hours	2½ hours	190

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

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

## **DARA PLAYGROUP, ARMAGH, BT60 4AL (5AB-0188)**

1. The pre-school centre is located in a housing estate off the Killylea Road in the city of Armagh. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes; the leader was appointed in November 2007. The centre provides a High/Scope programme for the children.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the management group and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. In their response to the inspection questionnaire, almost all of the parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the centre's provision, in particular they appreciate the caring, friendly staff and the varied range of experiences provided for the children. The responses from the management group and the staff were also very positive and supportive of the work of the centre. All of the responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection. An analysis of the parental questionnaire and a summary of the written comments were shared with the staff and the chair of the Management Group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The working relationships at all levels are very good.

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

5. The centre gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- There is a happy, relaxed atmosphere in the centre with good working relationships at all levels. The staff make good use of the space available to create an attractive and interesting learning environment for the children. The children are well behaved and mannerly.
- The staff provide an interesting and varied programme for the children and there are satisfactory and, at times, good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children are well motivated and often sustain periods of concentrated and purposeful play. The development of the children's creative skills and the promotion of the world around us are particular strengths.
- The recently established team, under the guidance of the leader, demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children and the development of the centre.

**7. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.**

The staff need to:

- ensure that the quality of their interaction with the children is more consistently of a high standard;
- review and modify aspects of the organisation of the day to ensure all time is used more effectively to promote learning; and
- develop a clear link between the methods of assessment and the written planning to ensure the children's interests and needs are built upon.

8. The staff have not yet begun the process of self-evaluation but have identified the outdoor play area as a priority for development. The contribution made by the centre's early years specialist (EYS) has important strengths, including the cluster support and regular visits to the centre. The staff, with the continued support from the EYS, are well placed to continue the development work required.

9. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school centre is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS**

- There are some raised flag stones in the paved outdoor area that could present a risk to the children and staff.

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