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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

Happy Faces Playgroup Clady

Inspected: February 2009

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Happy Faces Playgroup
Address:	83A Bellspark Road CLADY Co Tyrone BT82 9QY
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	26 February 2009
Date of previous inspection:	19 November 2002

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	19	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	17	-
• funded by Department of Education	11	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	1	-
• 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	2	-
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	75%	-

* 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	0

Number of: **	
Students	1
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	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned:	76.5%
Number of written comments:	5

HAPPY FACES PLAYGROUP, CLADY, CO TYRONE, BT82 9QY (2AB-0449)

1. Happy Faces Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation in the grounds of the Urney Naomh Columba Gaelic Athletic Club in Clady. The children attending the centre come from the surrounding rural areas. The leader and assistant have remained in post since the last inspection in 2002. The centre has a secure, well-developed outdoor area.

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. Most of the parents responded to the questionnaire and five made additional written comments. The responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision and those who responded appreciate the caring, supportive staff and value the pre-school setting within the community. Six management and three staff questionnaires were completed and the responses were also highly affirmative of all aspects of the work of the centre. The responses from all of the questionnaires have been taken into account as part of the inspection and were shared with the staff and management group.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is inadequate and needs to be developed further. While the staff are caring and demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children, they need to develop higher expectations for the children's behaviour and concentrated play. The curricular area of personal, social and emotional development needs to be a priority area for improvement in the centre's development plan.

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

5. The staff give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and effective policies and programmes are 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:

- the staff display a strong commitment to the development of the pre-school centre and have included new initiatives such as the Media Initiative to enhance community links and better understanding and awareness of diversity and inclusion. Relationships with the parents and the local community are very good;
- the standard of the accommodation is high and there is a bright and attractive learning environment, which includes interesting displays of the children's art work;
- the lengthy period of free play enables the children to experience a range of interesting activities and to develop awareness and understanding, mainly through role-play about the world around them; and
- the children are encouraged to develop good physical skills and to learn in the well-developed outdoor area.

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

- There is a need to ensure that the quality of the staff interaction with the children is of a consistently higher standard to sustain the children's involvement in purposeful play and learning.
- The staff need to implement more consistently and effectively the centre's behaviour management policy to promote safe and concentrated play.
- The staff need to develop the planning of the pre-school curriculum to ensure a broader and more challenging range of activities to meet the varying needs and interests of the individual children.

8. The use of self-evaluation to identify, prioritise and implement improvement, particularly in planning for and assessment of learning, is at an early stage of development. The contribution made by the centre's early years specialist (EYS) has strengths, including the start made to development planning for improvement in the centre. It will be important that the staff work closely with the EYS in order to ensure that the children attain the standards in their pre-school education of which they are capable.

9. In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Some children were allowed to run unsupervised in the playroom where sand and toys on the floor were presenting as trip hazards.

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