

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

O'Fiaich Playgroup, Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in May 2013



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

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	O'Fiaich Playgroup
Address:	96/97 Callanbridge Road ARMAGH BT60 4BT
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	23 May 2013
Date of previous inspection:	7 March 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	17	0
in their immediate pre-school year	12	0
funded by Department of Education (DE)	12	0
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	12	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
with English as an additional language	*	0
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	83%	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	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
3¼ hours	-	198

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	17
Percentage returned	59%
Number of written comments:	4

1. Introduction

O' Fiaich Playgroup is located in the community centre in Callenbridge Park, Co Armagh. Almost all of the staff have been in post for since the previous inspection. The children come from the surrounding area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the playgroup.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Seventeen questionnaires were issued to the parents and ten were returned, four with written comments. The staff and management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all of the aspects of the work of the playgroup. The parents and the staff praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for the children.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The organisation has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is outstanding.

- The children are settled and have established good relationships with one another and the adults. They take turns and understand the importance of sharing during play. Most of the children are able to express their ideas and needs and are developing appropriate listening and talking skills. They enjoy exploring and experimenting with a range of resources and activities and are able to sustain concentrated play for extensive periods of time. They are able to self-manage at the snack table helping with the preparation of the food and pouring their own drinks. They have acquired a good range of self-help skills.
- There are effective arrangements for early identification and intervention for children with additional needs in language. The children are able to participate in a wide range of language activities that are effectively improving their attention and listening and improving their vocabulary. They have a very good understanding of early mathematical language.

- The children make creative models and are able to make choices and decisions about the type of materials needed to illustrate their ideas. Their representational drawing is effectively detailed according to their stages of development. The children enjoy the outdoor learning and are developing their understanding about growing plants, vegetables and herbs; their sensory awareness is well developed.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The playgroup staff work closely with the children and their families: they know and understand the needs of the children; they plan appropriate routines to promote the children's independence and social skills; and they work hard to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem through a supportive and caring ethos. There is a consistent approach to positive behaviour management.
- The staff have created a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children, particularly in the outdoor area, which is greatly enhanced with imaginative and energetic activities to promote the children's curiosity and physical skills. There is a good flow to the organisation of the day and all time is used effectively for learning. The children's work is attractively presented and labelled with text which is effectively developing the children's awareness of the written word.
- The staff interaction with the children is of a high standard. There are many instances where the staff build effectively on the children's interest and ideas. They listen to the children and give them time to respond to a range of effective open-ended questions and promote effective language development.
- Effective communication has been established with the parents and outside agencies to support the children identified with special needs. The staff understand the needs of the children well and communicate relevant information about the children's progress and development to the parents. There are effective transitional arrangements made with four local primary schools to which the children transfer to for year one.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The leader leads by example and is a very good role model in the playroom. She is well-supported by the deputy leader and the newly appointed assistant in developing a child-centred ethos to meet the needs of the children. The leader and deputy have overseen a significant number of developments to enhance the provision and to implement a range of staff training and parent education programmes to improve the children's learning experiences. All the staff and the management group demonstrate a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to the development of the playgroup.

- The staff are reflective about the ongoing priorities for improvement and are beginning to document their findings through the self-evaluation and development planning process. The action plans need to focus sharply on the specific actions to promote the children's learning and the arrangements for monitoring the improvements made.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation has worked with the staff for a number of years and both parties report a very good working relationship. The EYS provides excellent support and guidance and has assisted the staff well in bringing about improvements in the provision.
- The staff communicate effectively with the parents through a range of means such and provide relevant feedback on the children's progress and development. The playgroup has engaged in an effective language based support programme involving multi-agency facilitation for the parents and staff.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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