



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Our Lady's Pre-School  
Playgroup, Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2012



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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

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name of pre-school setting:</b> | Our Lady's Pre-School Playgroup                                    |
| <b>Address:</b>                    | Our Lady's Primary School<br>Deanby Gardens<br>BELFAST<br>BT14 6NN |
| <b>Management Type:</b>            | Voluntary  |

|                                     |                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Date of inspection:</b>          | 24 October 2012 |
| <b>Date of previous inspection:</b> | 25 October 2006 |

### 1. Details of Children

| <b>Total number of children:</b>  | <b>am session</b> | <b>pm session</b> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| attending the pre-school setting  | 14                | -                 |
| in their immediate pre-school year  | 14                | -                 |
| funded by Department of Education (DE)  | 14                | -                 |
| qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2  | *                 | -                 |
| 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  | *                 | -                 |
| 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  | 97%               | -                 |

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

\*\* 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                                       | 0                | 2                |
| Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification | 0                | 2                |
| Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification   | 0                | 0                |
| New appointments within previous 12 months                    | 0                | 0                |

| <b>Number of: ***</b> |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students              | 1 |
| 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> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2¾ hours                           | -                                    | 188   |

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Number issued to parents:   | 13 |
| Percentage returned         | 1% |
| Number of written comments: | 0  |

## 1. Introduction

Our Lady's Pre-school Playgroup is accommodated in a dedicated classroom within Our Lady's Girls' Primary School. At the time of the inspection all of the children attending were girls and all were in their immediate pre-school year. The children come from the local area; none of the children had been identified as having additional needs.

## 2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations, discussions with the staff and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school setting.

The views of the parents and staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The small number of questionnaires returned from parents and staff were very positive about all aspects of the provision.

## 3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school setting is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the children are to be met more effectively.

Summary of key findings

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Children's Achievements<br>Quality of Provision<br>Leadership and management | Satisfactory<br>Satisfactory<br>Inadequate |
|--|--|

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### 4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is satisfactory.

- The children are settled, developing their social skills and co-operate well with the daily routines. While the majority of the children can make independent choices and sustain their own play, about one third of the children are too dependent on the adults for in their play.
- A majority of the children are very interested in experimental writing through a range of activities in the playroom; the children all enjoy the while group story and rhyme session. A small group of the children talk confidently to each other and the staff about their experiences. Approximately half of the children require further support to develop their language and communication skills. More needs to be done to encourage the children to use books during the session.

- A few of the children show an understanding of simple mathematical concepts as they sort and choose materials by colour and size. During the inspection, a small group of children took on roles in the imaginative play area for a sustained period. They also showed interest in using the painting activities available. There were very limited examples of the children using their senses to investigate, explore and experiment with materials. The Early Years Specialist (EYS) has appropriately identified the World Around Us as an underdeveloped curricular area.

## 5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

- The playroom is well presented into distinct areas for play and the children's artwork is celebrated through attractive displays. The outdoor area is poorly resourced and there is limited storage. The interest area needs to be relocated to child height allowing them opportunities to explore the range of natural materials on display.
- The staff have established warm, supportive relationships with the children, they give them praise for their achievements and at times engage in conversations which encourage their language and learning. The staff need to develop their skill and understanding of how to support more effectively all of the children in their learning and foster their oral communication skills.
- While the staff have made recent progress in developing their shorter term planning with the help and guidance of their EYS it remains underdeveloped overall. Since the last inspection there has been little effective developmental work to build the knowledge and capacity of the staff in curricular planning to inform progression and challenge in the pre-school programme. There is limited planning for outdoor and hall play.
- The gathering and use of assessment information on the children's progress is also underdeveloped.
- There are no children currently identified as having additional needs in the setting. The staff recognise the need to develop a comprehensive policy for Special Educational Needs and the benefits of accessing relevant training.
- Parents meet with the staff to discuss their children's progress each term. Links with parents, the schools to which the children will transfer and other agencies such as Sure Start should be developed further to ensure a more joined up approach to encouraging parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care are good. The children appear happy and well cared for.
- The pre-school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example regular opportunities for energetic physical play and a fruit break.

## 6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate.

- The leadership and management of this pre-school setting need to build their skill and expertise through accessing relevant training and support. They need to improve their strategic planning and self-evaluation in order to bring about sustained improvements in the areas identified through this inspection.
- Since the last inspection there have been several changes in the personnel who provide early years specialist support through the Early Years Organisation (EYO). The most recent EYS who has provided support and advice is currently on extended leave; her support has been of a good quality. It is essential that the staff, management and new EYS work collaboratively to ensure sufficient resources are made available and the necessary actions identified to bring about improvements are implemented fully.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In particular, the pre-school setting needs to; identify a deputy designated person on the staff team, identify a designated member of the Management Committee who has responsibility for child protection, set up systems for recording information about allegations of abuse, ensure committee members have all had the relevant training required and update all policies in line with changes made.
- The Education and Training Inspectorate will carry out a monitoring visit within six working weeks to ensure that important safeguarding issues identified are addressed appropriately.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school setting is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the children are to be met more effectively.

The key areas for improvement are:

- the staff need to improve their systems for recording children's progress, using this information to plan for individuals and ensure progression in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the staff need to promote more consistently the children's language and communication skills and encourage the children to explore, investigate and experiment; and
- the leadership and management need to develop their roles by monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the provision more rigorously.

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



**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The current procedures for collecting children directly from the outdoor area presents a potential risk and needs to be reviewed.
- Some of the outdoor equipment is not age appropriate and needs to be removed.

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