

Charity Commission report

We provided 24 funded places for the academic year September 2017 - June 2018. There was a change in staff with Lisa Johnston leaving as Playgroup Leader and Danielle O'Hanlon taking her place. Danielle is a qualified teacher who specialises in Early Years. Staff attended many cluster training days provided by the Early Years organisation and continued to avail of the support from our Early Years Specialist to assist with the progression of the playgroup as well as enabling staff to put strategies into place to assist and support the children in our care.

We had our yearly inspection and the area of inspection was the quality of the physical environment. The inspection went very well with only a few slight adjustments to be made for the new term. We also had our ETI Inspection in April 2018 which went extremely well, with only a few minor enhancements to be made. The Playgroup are immensely proud with the outcome of this inspection.

We had a number of visitors and trips for the children over the academic year - in October as part of our Halloween celebrations we had Jump, Jiggle & Jive visit the Playgroup to the enjoyment of the children and some parents! As part of our Christmas celebrations the Playgroup visited Finaghy Primary School to watch the Nativity Play and Santa came to visit our Christmas Party. In February as part of our 'All About Me' topic we visited the W5 and took part in the 'My Body' workshop. The children really enjoyed this and learnt a lot from the trip. At the beginning of March, the Playgroup visited Streamvale Farm as part of our Spring theme - we got to feed lots of baby animals. In May we covered 'People Who Help Us' and had a visit from the Lollipop Lady to support this. We were unable to get the fire brigade out as they no longer facilitate school visits, which was disappointing. In June we talked about 'Starting School' and began to prepare for the children's transition to Primary One. All of the children have received a place in Finaghy Primary School which allowed the staff in Benmore Playgroup and the Primary One staff of Finaghy Primary were able to work together to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible. We took a number of visits to the P1 classes and took photos of the teachers, classroom assistants, classrooms and other facilities to create a book to help children familiarise themselves with the school. We also set up our own classroom in our story room and provided the Finaghy Primary uniforms for the children to dress up and role play.

As part of our music and movement sessions the staff continued to use Jo Jingles over the year, the children really enjoy this.

The Playgroup were also invited to Finaghy Library again this year to take part in the Rhyme Challenge - this took place once a week during the Spring and Summer terms, parents were invited to attend a celebration once we had completed our Rhymes.

We had two students join us for a week from Wheelock College in America - they came to observe our implementation of the Respecting Difference Media Initiative and were keen to tell staff how impressed they were with how we include the 'puppets' in such a great manner. The new Playgroup Leader was given the opportunity this year to get training in this Media Initiative and our two assistants were given the chance to attend Refresher Training - everyone is a lot more confident in delivering this Media Initiative and feel it works a lot more seamlessly having attended the relevant training.

We will continue to work on our implementation of the Respecting Difference Media Initiative in the classroom and ensure we are getting as much out of this as we can.

We received funding from the Department of Education which could be spent on training, resources etc. The Team decided together that the Playgroup was in need of an update on resources - particularly for the outdoor area. Our aim over the next term is to continue the enhancement of our outdoor area, this has been a long but successful process, the outdoor area has already improved greatly and will now be ready for the next academic year.