

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Crow's Nest Community  
Playgroup, Aghadowey

Report of an Inspection in  
November 2013

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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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



### Quantitative terms

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%

### Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	14	*	14% <sup>1</sup>	*
Staff	4	*	50%	*
Management	*	*	*	*

\* fewer than 5

The small number responses made in the confidential questionnaire were highly positive about all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the playgroup.

## 2. Context

Crow's Nest Playgroup is accommodated in a dedicated mobile within the grounds of Culcrow Primary School. Of the children who attend the funded morning session, 14 are in their immediate pre-school year and the remaining four places are filled with younger children who will have two years of pre-school. The afternoon session for younger children is not funded by DE. The children who attend travel from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, there has been a complete change of leadership and staff. The current playgroup leader took up post in 2010.

## 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

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<sup>1</sup> 1. The ETI is trialling a new range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage of questionnaires returned may be low.

#### 4. Overall finding

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### Key findings of the inspection

##### 5. Achievements and standards

The children are well settled, highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They remain on task for sustained periods with high levels of attention and concentration. They make independent choices and decisions, investigating, selecting and using the full range of equipment and materials provided. Almost all of the children play collaboratively, have well developed social skills and are caring and empathetic to one another. The small number of children who are identified with additional learning needs and those who are younger and at an earlier stage of development are well settled and fully integrated into the group.

Almost all of the children have good language and communication skills. They are confident to ask questions and talk to each other and the staff about their experiences and their play using a very good range of vocabulary. They refer to books in areas of play, enjoy browsing in the book area and listen very attentively to well managed group story sessions. Many of the children are beginning to use tools and enjoy experimental writing and mark making. While the children have good overall opportunities to participate in songs and rhymes this should be included as an integral part of the daily programme.

The children are developing well both their fine motor skills and gross motor skills through daily practice using a wide range of equipment both indoors and outdoors.

The children's enthusiasm to use their senses to explore and investigate natural materials and objects in the playroom and outdoors is a particular strength. They also use construction materials creatively and the materials in the creative area with imagination to make simple models and representations. They solve problems and many of the children show an early understanding of size, shape and number.

##### 6. Provision

The staff have a good understanding of the pre-school curriculum. They are all sensitive and supportive towards the children; they listen to them carefully, value and build on their ideas and skilfully extend their thinking, language and learning naturally through the play.

The learning environment is well set out to provide choice and support the children's independence. It is enhanced by the incorporation of a good range of natural resources into areas of play indoors and the attractive rural location is well used to support learning outdoors.

The planned programme is broad and balanced with very good opportunities to learn across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff keep relevant observations of the children's responses and use them effectively to track their progress and development. The staff, along with their early years specialist have identified appropriate aspects of the planning and assessment methods which they plan to develop further.

Children with additional needs are identified early and given good support to reach their full potential. The playgroup is committed to an ethos of inclusion and diversity which welcomes and values every child. The staff liaise closely with parents and other relevant agencies.

The playgroup provides outstanding pastoral care; the inclusive and welcoming ethos is based on excellent working relationships among the staff team and the quality care and support provided for the children.

The children are provided with healthy snacks and participate in a good range of physical activity outdoors on a regular basis.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The leader has made very good progress in developing her leadership and management skills, supported by the excellent well focused and well paced training and guidance provided by the playgroups independent early years specialist. All of the staff team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work effectively together to bring about improvements. There is clear evidence of significant development in recent years. More systematic processes for self-evaluation and action planning are being developed.

There are effective links with the parents and the adjoining primary school to ensure good communication and smooth transitions to the next stage of the children's education.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following minor areas need to be addressed:

- the leader and member of the management committee need to complete their training needs on the date identified.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Health and safety**

- An extensive section of the perimeter fence of the outdoor area incorporates barbed wire at child height. This is a potential hazard during outdoor play.
- The extensive outdoor area has a low boundary wall with direct access to a very busy road. This is a potential hazard during outdoor play and collection times.
- The high level of supervision required to ensure safety impacts negatively on the staffs interactions with the children to promote learning.

**Accommodation**

- Only one child sized toilet is available for the playgroup. This is inadequate.



## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Crow's Nest Community Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	127 Curragh Road Aghadowey COLERAINE Co Londonderry BT51 4BT
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	11 November 2013
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	May 2006

1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	25	-
in their immediate pre-school year	14	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	14	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	14	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
with English as an additional language	1	-
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	%	

\* 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	3	1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
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>
3 hours	-	188

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