

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Caledon Playgroup, Caledon,
Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection in
October 2014

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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.

The parents and the staff who responded to the questionnaire were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. They commented on the caring and valuable contribution made to the children's education by the staff.

2. Context

Caledon Playgroup is located in Caledon village and is a feeder pre-school for the two local primary schools. The staff are in post since the last inspection in 2006.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are happy on arrival and quickly settle to play. They appear secure in the routines of the day including snack and transition arrangements. Their play varies from that which is collaborative to solitary. A majority of the children sustain concentrated play and all are well-behaved. The children are effectively developing social skills and are forming friendships.
- The children's use of language and communication skills is variable. When given the opportunity they enjoy books and a majority are able to listen and engage in conversations during play and at the snack table. The children's early mark making and writing is developing at an appropriate pace. Most of the children are able to express their ideas through representational drawings and paintings and these are mounted in colourful displays around the playgroup. A small number of the children are delayed in the production of language and require specific programmes to meet their language development needs.
- The children are effectively developing their understanding of shape, size and number through play. The children have developed a high level of awareness about the behaviour of animals and features of vegetables in autumn.
- The children's physical skills are mainly being developed through painting and drawing using an appropriate range of tools. The staff make effective use of the large outdoor area for exploration of the world around us curricular area. The children need to develop further the skills of climbing, balancing and running and engage in more energetic play sessions.

6. Provision

- The staff have created a stimulating and attractive learning environment in the playroom and spacious outdoor area. There is a supportive and caring family ethos in the playgroup based on excellent relationships at all levels. The children turn readily to the staff for support.
- The daily timetable is well organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff and to respond to the interests of the children. The snack and transitions between the activities are developed effectively to provide very good learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- The quality of the interaction between all of the staff and the children is consistently of a good to very good standard. Each of the staff members effectively promote sustained involvement in play and the children are well-settled and motivated to learn at the beginning of the year.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. All of the staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a secure and stimulating environment that helps the children to grow in confidence and to develop their awareness of others.
- The written planning and assessment methods are comprehensive and guide the pre-school programme. The theme of autumn is used effectively to connect the learning across the curricular areas and the children enjoy a range of interesting activities. Given the wide variation in the children's stages of development there

is a need to develop further the assessment of the children's learning in order to take account of the children's responses to the activities. The assessment records provide information on personal, social and emotional development and aspects of language however, these need to be extended further to identify the children's progress and to inform more fully the planning to meet their individual needs.

- The provision for the children with additional needs is at an early stage of development given the time of the year. There are effective partnerships with the parents and the children's strengths and needs are identified. It will be important to make links with the relevant external support agencies and ensure that the programme of support for the children with additional needs is more effectively built upon within the playgroup. The individual education plans need to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that the children make the best possible progress in learning. The respecting difference programme is used effectively to promote positive attitudes to one another.
- The playgroup gives very good attention to healthy eating and there are plans to extend the provision for physical activity.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a collaborative team approach and sharing of professional learning and staff development. All of the staff are involved in and committed to the ongoing development of the provision. They are beginning to make the link between the self-evaluation of their strengths and areas for development and are developing a three year plan to implement an appropriate pace of improvement. It is appropriate that the actions for improvement focus more specifically on the evaluation of the children's learning and their individual needs.
- The parents are fully involved in the life and work of the playgroup. The children transfer mainly to the local primary schools and relevant information about the children's progress is provided to the appropriate year one teacher.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the early years organisation (EYO) provides effective support to develop the provision. The EYS cluster support is effectively building the capacity of the staff in the playgroup to sustain ongoing improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision.

The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address:

- there is a need to develop further the assessment for learning and to use the information to plan to meet the children's specific individual needs.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup progress on the areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	18	-
In their immediate pre-school year	18	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	18	-
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	*	-
with English as an additional language	*	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	80%	-

* 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	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	4	
New appointments within previous 12 months	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
3 hours	-	189

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