

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Gracehill and Galgorm  
Playgroup, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2014

*eti*

*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

## Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Context	1
3. Focus of inspection	1
4. Overall finding	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Conclusion	3
Appendix	

## 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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement pre-school/Education and Training Inspectorate: a process for self evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

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

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 and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The responses from the parents indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the care and the overall quality of the provision provided by the playgroup. The staff responses indicate the staff are reflective in their work and have a strong team approach in developing the provision further.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	25	7	26% <sup>1</sup>	6
Staff	*	*	75%	*

\* fewer than 5

## 2. Context

Gracehill and Galgorm playgroup is accommodated in a community centre in the village of Galgorm. The playgroup operates one part-time morning session. All of the children who attend are in their pre-school year and most of them come from the local area. Since the last inspection a new leader and new staff team have been appointed.

## 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

---

<sup>1</sup> 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>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### Key findings of the inspection

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Most of the children enter the playgroup with well developed language and play skills. This provides a very good starting point for their continued development and progress in each of the areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children spend sustained periods of concentrated and productive play at the full range of activities provided. They have high levels of independence and autonomy in their learning and in their management of the daily routines. They are forming friendships and have excellent social skills with one another.
- Most of the children have a good general knowledge and vocabulary which they use well to ask questions, talk about their ideas and explain their thinking to adults and each other. The children are interested in books and stories and engage in early experimental writing in a range of meaningful play contexts.
- The children use materials creatively and independently to develop their own ideas. They make detailed representational drawings and models. They take on roles, play collaboratively and with good imagination during home play. The children participate well during songs and rhymes sessions.
- Many of the children have a well developed awareness of early mathematical concepts and language. They frequently, count, use positional language, make comparisons of size and talk about colour and shape during their play.
- The children enjoy exploring the properties of the natural materials incorporated into the play areas and have good interest in and knowledge of the planned environmental topics and themes.
- The children's fine and gross motor skills are developing well. Many of them are confident in their use of tools such as scissors, pencils and construction materials. They climb, dig, throw and catch with co-ordination.

#### 6. Provision

- The staff team have to set out all of the materials on a daily basis. They create stimulating and well resourced areas of play which the children access independently. The staff make effective use of the nearby park to promote the children's learning outdoors.

- The staff are sensitive and supportive in their work with the children. They listen carefully to their ideas and often build on them well to extend their language and learning.
- The staff are making good progress in developing their planning to provide a broad and balanced range of interesting experiences for the children. The staff have identified the planning and assessment methods as a priority for ongoing staff development. While the staff know the children well, the assessment and record keeping needs to be more systematic, consistent and comprehensive and used more effectively to tailor the planning to the needs of individual children.
- The quality of the pastoral care is very good. There is a warm, caring and respectful ethos in the playgroup. The children's behaviour is excellent.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leader is developing effectively her management of the group. The staff report that they enjoy their work and support each other well. There is evidence of ongoing staff development and improvements in aspects of the provision. The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation provides good support, information and advice which is valued by the staff. The committee, staff and the early years specialist need to work closely together to manage resources effectively and develop further their strategic development planning in order to ensure the good provision is built on further.
- There are good links with the main feeder primary schools to promote a smooth transition and useful links with other agencies that are accessed when required. The parents are kept informed through a range of appropriate means including meetings and a regular newsletter.
- 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 reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Gracehill and Galgorm Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Community Centre 3 Raphael Way Galgorm BALLYMENA Co Antrim BT42 1GQ
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	13 May 2014
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	10 October 2008

1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	26	-
in their immediate pre-school year	26	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
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	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	*	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	To be supplied by group	-

\* 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	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	

<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>
3 hours	-	188



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2014

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

