

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Laurencetown Pre-School  
Playgroup, Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection in  
March 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  
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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 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 and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Almost all of the parental responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision provided by the playgroup. In particular, they highlighted the hard-working and committed staff and the high regard for the playgroup in the local community. All of the responses were shared with the staff and the management representative.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents		6	24% <sup>1</sup>	5
Staff	*	*	*	*

\* fewer than 5

## 2. Context

Laurencetown Pre-school Playgroup is located within the community centre in Laurencetown village, County Down. Since the last inspection in 2006, there have been several staffing changes and a new leader was appointed.

## 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> 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>Very Good</b>

#### Key findings of the inspection

##### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are happy and very well behaved. They engage in purposeful and productive play and can produce representational work of a very high standard. Their language is developing well and they can talk about their work and interests and contribute well in discussions.
- During group activities and sessions the children listen attentively, follow simple instructions and persevere to complete tasks.
- The children enjoy the opportunities provided to develop their fine and gross physical skills and demonstrate good hand-eye co-ordination when handling large equipment and apparatus.
- A majority of the children demonstrate good pre-writing skills and early number recognition.
- The staff encourage the children to be independent and, as a result, they are developing good self-help skills. They can make independent choices, attend to their own needs during the snack routine, access materials and resources freely to enhance their play and help to tidy up during transition periods. During the inspection the children engaged readily with the staff and approached them for guidance and support when required.

##### 6. Provision

- There is a friendly, caring ethos in the playgroup based on very good relationships at all levels.
- All aspects of the pre-school curriculum are thoughtfully planned and appropriately resourced to ensure variety, progression and challenge in the children's learning throughout the year. Themes and topics are used well to enhance the provision and the staff are skilful in ensuring that all opportunities that arise are used to promote language and learning.
- The quality of the interaction between all of the staff and the children is consistently of a very high standard. Throughout the inspection, the staff engaged purposefully with the children and built on the children's own ideas and interests by linking the learning effectively to real life contexts and in particular to the personal backgrounds of the children.

- The daily timetable is well organised to provide a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. Transitions between activities are smooth and the children are given sufficient time to complete a task before moving on to the next stage in the programme.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a secure, supportive environment that helps the children to grow in confidence and to develop their consideration for the needs and wishes of others.
- The written planning needs to be developed further in order to take more account of the children's differing needs and to identify more clearly the learning potential inherent in the activities.
- The staff know the children very well and, from the time of admission, keep regular detailed observations of their progress and development in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The written records available to the parents throughout the year should reflect a much broader balance of this information.
- The staff has identified a small number of children who require additional help with aspects of their learning. Appropriate strategies are deployed and additional support is available to help the children overcome barriers to learning. There is evidence to show that the actions taken by the staff are having a positive impact on the children's progress.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leader is a very good role model for his staff and promotes a team approach to the work of the playgroup. All of the staff are hard-working and committed to the care and well-being of the children and contribute to the high quality of the provision.
- The current development plan outlines appropriate areas for development and improvement in the provision.
- The children transfer to a wide number of primary schools and the staff have worked hard to build relationships with some of the schools.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation has worked with the playgroup for a number of years and both parties report a good working relationship. The EYS has assisted the staff in bringing about improvements in the provision to date and should now focus on the few areas identified in the report as a priority.
- 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 Department.

## **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.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Laurencetown Pre-school Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	Drumnascamph Road Laurencetown
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	28 April 2014
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	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	24	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	24	
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	3	
with English as an additional language	0	
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		4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		1
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



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