

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Portaferry Pre-School
Playgroup, Co Down

Report of an Inspection
in October 2013



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 questionnaire¹.

Prior to the inspection the parents, staff and management group were invited to make their views known through a confidential questionnaire. A small number of the parents and staff completed the on-line questionnaires. In addition, a few parents spoke with the inspectors on the day of the inspection.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	*		*
Staff	*		*

* fewer than 5

Almost of the returns indicated a high level of satisfaction with playgroup's provision. In particular, the parents praised the staff and the work of the playgroup.

2. Context

The playgroup is located within the grounds of Portaferry Integrated Primary School.

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.

¹ The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the response rate may be low.

4. Overall finding

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

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well settled, for the time of year, and most engage well in sustained and purposeful play co-operating readily with the staff.
- The children browse in the book areas and in the reference books available in the areas of play. Most of the children handle the books well and can turn the pages properly.
- Many of the children engage in early mark making and are making good representational drawings and paintings for their age and stage of development.

6. Provision

- The attractively presented playroom provides good opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The children can access resources independently which encourages them to develop their play.
- During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in valuable discussion about their play and experiences, and participated sensitively in many of the activities.
- During the free play session, the timetable is organised to provide an appropriate balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. Routines, such as the tidy-up routine, are used effectively to promote early mathematical language. Due to the small number of children attending the playgroup, the number of children accessing the snack routine at any one time should be reduced. This change would provide better opportunities for the majority of the children to benefit from interactions with each other during the play programme.
- The written planning indicates that a varied curriculum is provided for the children. As the staff continue to develop their planning, they need to focus more effectively on identifying the learning expected from the activities, and to use the children's subsequent achievements to inform future planning.
- The small enclosed outdoor area has been imaginatively designed to provide a good range of opportunities for learning and for the children to develop their physical skills.

- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity which encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- 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 Departments but the following minor area needs to be addressed:
- the Chairperson of the management group has child protection training relevant to her role as a youth worker but now needs to access training specific to her role as the designated child protection officer on the management group of the playgroup.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader has been in post for 6 years, during this time she has developed aspects of the playgroup's provision. The staff demonstrate a caring approach to the children, they are hard-working and dedicated to their work. The staff are at an early stage in developing and implementing the process of self-evaluation.
- Over the past two years, the support provided by the centre's Early Years Specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO), has been fragmented. At the time of the inspection a recently appointed EYS attended the report back. The staff report that they require more regular and targeted support from the EYS in order to continue to develop the work in the playgroup. There is a particular need for the EYS to support the staff in the development and implementation of their self-evaluation process.

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 organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Portaferry Pre-school Playgroup
Address:	93c High Street PORTAFERRY Co Down BT22 1QU
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	16 October 2013
Date of previous inspection:	15 May 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	13	7
in their immediate pre-school year	13	0
funded by Department of Education (DE)	13	0
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	13	0
with a statement of special educational needs	0	0
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	0
with English as an additional language	0	0
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
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

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	1	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	1	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	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	2½ hours	188

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