

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballywalter Pre-school,
Ballywalter, County Down

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
November 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Since the last inspection, Ballywalter Preschool has re-located to a purpose-built mobile in the grounds of Ballywalter Primary School and a number of new staff have been employed. The children attending the come from the village and surrounding areas.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	19	18
Funded by Department of Education	19	18
With statement of special educational needs	#	
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	6	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	91.6
Number of days open in previous school year	190

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Twelve parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were highly positive. In their written comments the parents praised: the staff for their commitment and dedication to their work with the children; the helpful information they receive on their children's progress and the informative newsletters which provide them with useful information about the programme on offer.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very well settled for the time of year; they engage confidently with the adults and with each other and are happy to talk about their work. They play collaboratively with each other for sustained periods of time and are familiar with the daily routines.
- The children are making very good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; their early mark making is of a high standard and is integrated naturally into many areas of play. Their early understanding of mathematical concepts is developing well, and they use the associated language of number, shape and size confidently throughout the day.
- The children browse books, enjoy stories and join in enthusiastically in the music and rhyme sessions. They engage with curiosity with a range of natural materials in the carefully planned activities which reflect well their needs and interests.
- The children are developing very well their motor skills through using the various authentic tools and equipment provided indoors and outdoors.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making continuous progress in all aspects of the playgroup curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide an attractive, child-centred learning environment, making effective use of all the available space and resources to extend the children's learning experiences. The outdoor provision is a particular strength of the programme; the children clearly enjoy exploring the wide range of learning opportunities in the thoughtfully prepared outdoor area.
- The staff plan a varied programme throughout the year which ensures progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and maximises the use of the local environment and community. The staff know the children well; however, they are not using their observations and assessment of the children's progress sufficiently well to inform their planning. The staff have identified appropriately the need to review and refine the methods for observing, recording and assessing the children.
- The staff interactions with the children, in particular the effective use of questions to promote and extend the children's language and understanding, is consistently of a high standard. The staff model skilfully the appropriate use of mathematical language in context and develop meaningfully the children's interest in books and printed materials.
- The children who require additional support are identified early; the staff take appropriate account of the recommendations of outside agencies in supporting the children. There is effective communication with the parents in relation to the children's individual needs and the progress they are making.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on all aspects of the children's learning and well-being. The child-centred ethos and positive working relationships at all levels create a positive and nurturing learning environment for the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The dedicated leader shares a clear vision for the provision. She is supported very well by the skilful staff team and the management committee in all areas of the life and work of the playgroup.
- The staff's approach to self-evaluation has brought about improvements in the playgroup's provision in the best interests of the children.
- The leader is employed as the playgroup's independent early year's specialist. While, she has been instrumental in sourcing high quality training for the members of the new management group which they report has been beneficial in helping them to understand more fully their roles and responsibilities. Going forward, the role of the early years specialist needs to be strengthened to ensure that the staff are kept up to date in the development of early years learning and development.
- There are effective working links and positive communication with the parents, who are very supportive of the work of the playgroup.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

Ballywalter Preschool has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>.

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

The arrangements for this inspection included:

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

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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