

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Belmont Playcare, Belfast

Voluntary Playgroup

Report of an inspection in
January 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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Belmont Playcare Pre-school is situated within the grounds of Belmont Primary School in East Belfast. The pre-school is accommodated in a pre-fabricated building with a small outdoor area. The pre-school operates two part-time sessions facilitated by two staff teams. Since the last inspection in 2009, there have been a number of changes in staff including an increase in the number of staff due to the introduction of the afternoon session in 2011. The pre-school moved to its current accommodation in 2010.

Number of children:	a.m. Class	p.m. Class
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	24	21
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	24	21
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	8	5
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	8	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	168.5 days
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Ten per cent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were positive about all aspects of the life and work of the pre-school. In written comments the parents highlighted how happy and well-settled their children are and the very good care and support provided by the staff. The staff highlighted the very good collaborative working between the two staff teams and the strong staff commitment to continuous improvement within the pre-school.

3. Focus of the inspection

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

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

KEY FINDINGS

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

- All of the children are well settled and engage purposefully for sustained periods throughout the sessions. They are familiar with the routines of the pre-school, access the resources they need independently and are very confident in engaging with the adults and their peers. A minority of the children engage collaboratively in their play; particularly within the small world and play dough areas.
- Those children who require support with aspects of their learning are integrated well within the group and make very good progress to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Most of the children have very good language and communication skills. They enjoy browsing in books; particularly the books associated with the birds display and the 'Bobby Bear' book, in which parents record the adventures of the teddy bear which children take turns in bringing home. The children have a keen interest in early mark making; a minority are beginning to write their names independently and show an interest in letters. Almost all of the children recognise their own names and can label their work independently. The children have very good fine motor skills and use scissors effectively. During the inspection small groups of children created imaginative models in the well-resourced junk art area. The children are beginning to use early mathematical language naturally during their play; particularly that related to shape and measures. They engage in counting and enjoyed investigating measuring tapes and a thermometer during outdoor play. Most of the children show a very good interest in the World Around Us.

6. Quality of provision

- The spacious playroom is well organised with a good range of natural and real resources to enhance the children's play. There is very good provision across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have identified the need to develop the provision for large physical play and the inspection endorses this as an appropriate focus.
- The adult interactions with the children are always good and often very good. The most effective interactions with the children are characterised by the staff's ability to allow the children adequate thinking and processing time. The staff are consistent across both sessions in the use of a very good range of strategies and approaches to support and develop the children's personal, social and emotional skills.
- The planning is comprehensive and the staff have very good processes in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned activities across both sessions and to reflect on the children's learning and interests. They make very good use of an appropriate range of observations and assessments of the children's learning to inform future planning.

- The staff have engaged in additional training to support children with special educational needs through the Early Years Inclusion Service. Very good quality support is provided for the children identified as having additional learning needs. The individual education plans outline an appropriate range of strategies to support the children and the children's progress is monitored and recorded regularly. The parents are kept well-informed and there are good links with a range of outside agencies.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, interaction and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- The centre co-ordinator and the leaders of each session work very well collaboratively to identify appropriate priorities for development. They provide very good leadership and have successfully established a culture of self-evaluation and reflection among all of the staff team, with a key focus on improving further the quality of the provision and the outcomes achieved by all of the children.
- The pre-school staff receive very good quality support from their independent early years specialist; most recently in developing their use of planning and observations of the children's learning. An appropriate three year development plan is in place with associated action plans. The targets on the action plans do not provide sufficient detail to be fully measurable.
- There are very good links with the parents who are kept informed about the life and work of the pre-school through informative newsletters. A very good range of visitors to the pre-school and the use of educational trips enhance well the children's learning experiences. The pre-school is developing further the links with feeder primary schools, including feedback from a local principal, to identify how to improve both the information provided and the preparation of the children for this important transition.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Belmont Playcare Pre-school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI will monitor how the pre-school sustains improvement.

Information on sessions and staff**Duration of sessions**

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	2 hours & 45 minutes	2 hours & 45 minutes

Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	6
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	6
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0

Number of: *	
Students	**
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

** Numbers fewer than 5 are redacted

N/A not available

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at:

<https://www.eti.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 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

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

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