

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Benmore Playgroup,
Belfast

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
April 2018



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

Benmore Playgroup is a voluntary playgroup located in the grounds of Finaghy Primary School. Since the last inspection a new leader and early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation have been appointed.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#
With English as an additional language	#

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

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

All of the staff completed the confidential questionnaire and the responses were all very positive. No parents responded to the questionnaire.

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

- All of the children are very well-settled and interact confidently with each other and with the staff. They engage for long periods in purposeful play, follow instructions, take turns in games and complete their tasks. They are independent in making choices for play and in meeting their own needs.
- The children follow and respond well to the basic rules of the playgroup and participate in the necessary routines of the day. They are eager to engage in activities and join enthusiastically in the learning opportunities available to them both indoors and outdoors. While their own representational art work shows close attention to detail and is age and stage appropriate for the time of year, some of the topic work displayed around the playroom is too adult directed.
- The children's records demonstrate progress in their learning and development to date.
- The children who have been identified with additional needs are well-integrated within the group and respond positively to the various strategies deployed by the staff to meet individual needs.

6. Quality of provision

- The written planning is comprehensive and guides the staff very well in their work with the children. The planning identifies clearly the learning potential of the planned activities and takes appropriate account of the individual needs, interests and responses of all the children to ensure variety, challenge and progression in their learning.
- Through their engagement with and observations of the children, the staff know the children very well and share information on their progress with the parents both formally and informally throughout the year. There are current plans and trials to use ICT to develop further the methods used to gather and collate information about the children's progress and development.
- The documentation outlining the support provided and the progress made for those children who require assistance with aspects of their learning and development is of a very high standard. Appropriate targets are set and strategies used to help ensure the children's needs are fully met.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children are generally of a good or very good standard. The staff join willingly in the children's play and generate interest and a sense of fun in many of the activities. In the best practice the staff build effectively on the children's personal interests and experiences, ask open-ended questions, recap on previous learning and promote an awareness of the world around them.
- The organisation of the day is well structured and provides for lengthy periods of indoor and outdoor play with smooth transitions between key times in the programme. Aspects of the snack routine need to be reviewed to ensure more effective use of staff time during the routine.

- The staff present an attractive and organised learning environment for the children, both indoors and outdoors. The available space is used very well and provides valuable opportunities for the staff and children to participate in collaborative play. While there is a range of good quality resources with some natural and authentic items incorporated into some/most of the areas of play, this practice should be included on a wider and more regular basis to enhance further the learning opportunities provided for the children.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on their learning and development. The children are forming positive relationships with the adults and one another which is evident in their personal and social skills.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff have made a very good start in the process of self-evaluation and development planning. They have identified appropriate priorities for improvement and development and have collated relevant evidence to support these. The associated action plans are helping to guide the work of the staff in providing high quality pre-school provision at all levels.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation is new to the playgroup this academic year and has supported the staff well in their work.
- The playgroup works in partnership with the parents to encourage them to play an active role in the education of their children. Effective links have been established with relevant agencies and the main feeder primary school for the benefit of the children.

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

Benmore Playgroup 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.

Health and Safety

- The child-proof gate separating the playroom and kitchen needs a more robust locking mechanism.
- The location of the outside Gas Valve Control handle presents a safety hazard to staff and children.

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 the early years specialist; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances ETI did not meet with the chair of the management group at the time of inspection.

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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