

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Big Red Balloon Day Nursery,
Bangor, County Down

Report of an inspection in
February 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



Quantitative 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on 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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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed learning and teaching 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 meeting with those involved with leadership and management including the proprietor; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Overall, the responses indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision. The responses were shared with the management group. None of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Big Red Balloon Day Nursery is situated on Broadway in Bangor, County Down. The playgroup has been part of the Department of Education's pre-school programme for three and an half years. The children attending the playgroup come from the greater Bangor area. The playgroup has a designated playroom and access to an enclosed secure outdoor play area.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children settle quickly to their chosen activity and engage readily with the staff and visitors to the playgroup. Most of the children play collaboratively and purposefully.
- The children engage well in imaginative role play and most are confident in using a range of small and large tools and equipment. They listen attentively during the large group story sessions and are keen to join in rhymes and songs. Many of the children's individual drawings are representational and show good attention to detail. A few children are beginning to write their own names.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the playgroup and the working relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff are caring and supportive to the children. They work very well as a team in the best interests of the children. The learning environment is set out in the distinct areas for learning.
- The staff often engage in purposeful interactions with the children, promoting effectively their self-esteem and language. In the best practice observed, the adults responded effectively to the children's interests and needs and used skilful questioning to promote their thinking. On a few occasions, the staff missed opportunities to encourage the children to exploit fully the learning potential of all the activities and the daily routines.
- The playgroup has a secure outdoor area that is used daily to develop aspects of the children's physical skills. The staff need to plan for the development of a wider range of physical skills that progress steadily over the year.
- The staff have made a good start to planning an interesting programme of activities for the children. The written planning outlines a sufficient range of learning for the children across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff need to take more account of the learning needs of groups of children within the playgroup to ensure that the links between the observations of the children's responses and the planning are acted on and include rigorous evaluations of the learning.
- The children benefit from a lengthy period of uninterrupted play. The organisation of daily routines and a small number of the transition times need to be reviewed in order to make more effective use of all time for learning.
- The staff have identified a small number of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning, it will be important for the staff to develop appropriate strategies for dealing the children who become less settled, at times.
- The staff give good attention to promoting healthy eating through the range of food and drink available to the children during the healthy snack. The children need to develop a wider range of physical skills.

7. Leadership and management

- All of the staff, the proprietor and members of the management committee work collaboratively and are all fully committed to achieving the best outcomes for the children in their care. The processes of self-evaluation and development planning are still at an early stage. The early years specialist needs to work more closely with the staff to develop the action plans that prioritise the areas of physical activity and the effective use of observations.
- 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 Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

The Big Red Balloon Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for development are the need to:

- develop appropriate strategies for managing the small number of children who become unsettled or disengaged, at times, from play; and
- develop further the planning, observations and self-evaluation processes used by the staff to bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE BIG RED BALLOON PLAYGROUP, BANGOR

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	15
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	15
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	4
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	1
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

* On 1 July.

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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.33%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
N/A	08.50-11.30	N/A

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Staff including, Leader	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0	

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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