

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bright Sparks Nursery,
Skainos Centre, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
June 2016



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 day nursery:

The day nursery 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 day nursery group demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the day nursery sustains improvement.
The day nursery needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the day nursery's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The day nursery 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 day nursery'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 management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

All staff members and a small number of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses were generally positive about the work of the playgroup. The small numbers of issues raised by parents and by staff members have been shared with the leadership and management group.

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

The day nursery is part of East Belfast Mission which is situated in the grounds of the Skainos Building on the Newtownards Road. The playgroup is in its second year of the pre-school programme, during which time there have been several changes across the staff team which have impacted negatively on development and improvement. At the time of the inspection nine children were enrolled for the funded session.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important area for improvement
Provision for learning	Requires significant improvement
Leadership and management	Requires significant improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children are well settled, can manage their own personal care and co-operate well with the daily routines. They manage their coats and bags and snack routine independently. The promotion of the children's independence is inhibited by limited access to resources.
- A majority of the children engage in short periods of play and are beginning to talk about their activities and experiences. Many are interested in early experimental writing and enjoy books and stories. The promotion of oral language, including daily songs and rhymes and of opportunities to mark-make in both indoor and outdoor routines is inconsistent.
- The children have limited opportunities to develop an interest in, and an early understanding of basic mathematical concepts. The staff do not model and introduce mathematical language through a sufficiently broad range of resources, activities and daily routines.
- The children enjoy using the art materials; the more able children are not encouraged to develop their art to the representational stage without using templates.
- The recent focus on the lifecycle of the butterfly interested many of the children. Their interest is not being built on through opportunities for them to explore natural and living things, both indoors and outdoors.

6. Provision for learning

- The playroom is constrained by insufficient resources with a poor layout and limited access to equipment. The outdoor area does not facilitate the children's learning.
- Self evaluation leading to improvement is under-developed in the newly-established setting. The planning does not ensure that there are clear learning opportunities across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staffs recognise the shortcomings and have made a start on observing the children at play and recording their responses. The staff require external support to develop further their understanding of and approach to the pre school curriculum and to planning and assessment in order to meet the differing needs of the children.
- There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the working relationships between the staff and the children are good. The staff are supportive and caring in their approach and help the children to develop their independence.
- The programme for healthy eating is satisfactory. However, as a consequence of the limited outdoor area and the limited use of the available hall regular periods of physical development and movement are restricted for the pre-school group.

7. Leadership and management

- Since the group entered the Department of Education-funded programme it has been a challenge for the management group to ensure stability in the staffing. The links with the Early Years Organisation should be continued in order to support a new leader, when appointed, and to help staff to develop further their practice to reflect more fully the provision outlined in the Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education.¹
- The staff do not meet formally to discuss, plan and review the delivery of the pre-school curriculum. The management group needs to review the daily timetable in order to formalise arrangements for staff to work together.
- Parents are kept up to date with the work and life of the pre school through a newsletter. The newsletter does not include information for the parents on how they can support their child's learning at home.
- The playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

8. Overall effectiveness

Bright Sparks Day Nursery 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the need for the:

- staff to establish a clear understanding of the pre-school curriculum;
- staff to develop clear long-and medium-term plans to ensure progression and to meet the needs of all children, and
- management group to review the staffing complement and establish stability in the leadership and staffing in the pre-school room.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

¹ Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education, CCEA, January 2006

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BRIGHT SPARKS DAY NURSERY

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time			
Attending part-time	9		
Under 3 years of age*	9		
Funded by Department of Education	9		
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	***		
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school			

* 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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	89
Average attendance for the previous year.	89
Number of days open in previous school year	191

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9.30 am	12 noon

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within the previous 12 months		

Number of: ****	
Students	
Trainees	

**** Total placements since September of current year

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