

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Carebears Community Playgroup,
Newtownstewart, County Tyrone

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Carebears Community Playgroup is located within a multi-purpose complex in Newtownstewart, County Tyrone. The children attending the playgroup come from the surrounding area. The leader and deputy leader were in post during the previous inspection; a new assistant was appointed in November 2017.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	18
Funded by Department of Education	18
With statement of special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	5
With English as an additional language	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	86
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

Seventy-two percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses highlighted the care and kindness shown to the children, the dedication of the staff and the regular, useful information they receive from the playgroup on their children's progress and welfare. The staff emphasised the collegial team approach to their work, clear lines of communication at all levels and the opportunities for professional capacity building.

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	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very well-settled, confident and highly motivated in their learning. They have very good levels of independence and engage confidently and respectfully with the staff and visitors. The children's behaviour is exemplary; they relate positively to each other and co-operate well in sharing the play resources.
- The children are making excellent progress in their overall development in relation to their age and the time of the year. They enjoy engaging in early mark-making across a range of play activities and show an interest in the wide range of books and reading material that is available throughout the playroom. All of the children listen very well; they use independently digital devices to record and listen to their own stories.
- The children have a very good understanding of a broad range of mathematical language which they apply in context across the play activities. They show perseverance and ingenuity when playing, for example, in the construction area, refining their ideas and selecting alternative resources to create imaginative interactive models.
- The children's well observed and creative art-work is imaginatively displayed around the playroom. Of particular note is the display of musical instruments made from junk materials which demonstrate the children's inventiveness and problem-solving skills. The children's natural curiosity about the world around us is used sensitively to encourage them to make predictions, investigate, discover and explore using planned activities and interactive displays. The children are able to use a broad vocabulary related to their senses to describe their ideas and opinions. This use of the senses is extended through story-telling, singing, action rhymes and making music.
- The children's physical skills are well developed. They make skilful use of a broad range of implements and tools, including, for example, a range of paint brushes and painting tools, writing implements, authentic tools, tweezers and tongs. The children's games and dance skills are well developed in the outdoor environment and in the shared use of the amenity hall within the community complex.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a welcoming, stimulating environment which develops the children's independence, decision making skills and natural interests through, for example, access to a wide range of resources and imaginative interactive displays of authentic and natural resources and the tools required to investigate them. The organisation of the day is well planned to use all the time available to provide very high quality learning experiences for the children. Snack time provides very good opportunities for the children to develop their independence and extend their social skills. The outdoor provision is exciting and imaginative; it provides different contexts for the children to apply their learning and the area is also used to display art work completed in conjunction with community artists.

- The staff work skilfully as a team to provide the best possible outcomes for the children and their families. All of the staff interactions are of a high quality; the staff are intuitive to the needs of the children and are flexible in extending play and learning through spontaneous activities directed by the children. The staff plan an imaginative and varied programme throughout the year across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and place a particular emphasis on including the children's ideas in their planning. Of particular note is the use of the local community who visit the playgroup, for example, local musicians, artists, story tellers and traditional dancers. The staff regularly record and assess the children's progress and learning using a variety of evidence including thoughtful observations, photographs and samples of art.
- The children identified as requiring additional support with their learning are identified early; their needs are well planned, documented and met through appropriate interventions based on advice from external agencies and the staff's own expertise and training.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on all aspects of the learning, teaching and outcomes. The staff provide a caring, happy and relaxed environment where the children's interests and opinions are valued.

7. Leadership and management

- The very effective and collegial staff team are all committed to providing the highest quality of pre-school provision for the local community. There is a well-embedded culture of reflection and self-evaluation in all aspects of the playgroup and clear evidence of continuous improvement in the indoor and outdoor provision. The independent early years specialist provides excellent support; she recognises the high expectations the staff have of themselves and the provision within the playgroup, and actively works alongside the team in planning further improvements.
- The playgroup has excellent links with parents including regular informative newsletters and workshop sessions and regular consultation through questionnaires. The management committee has a positive working relationship with the staff. They organise extensive fund-raising activities and are committed to accessing training in order to build their capacity to support the work of the playgroup. Links with external agencies are well-established including inclusion services, the local Surestart and health agencies.

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

Carebears Community Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children.

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 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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