

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Carrowdore Early Years
Centre, County Down

Report of an inspection in
March 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	3
Appendix	

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 confidential questionnaires.

A small number of the parents and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires. Overall, the responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the centre's work. In particular, the parents praised the work of the staff and recognise the high standards that their children are achieving in their learning and development. The responses were shared with the staff and management group.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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

Carrowdore Early Years Centre is located in the grounds of Carrowdore Primary School on the Ards peninsula in County Down. All of the children attending are in their immediate pre-school year and come mainly from the local area. Since the last inspection, the centre has acquired new purpose-built accommodation and has access to a number of enclosed outdoor play areas which are used well on a daily basis for physical activity and outdoor play. One new member of staff has been employed in the past year.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very well-settled, friendly and confident; they engage well with the adults, often inviting them to join in their play, and co-operate with their peers as they join in paired and group work. The children explore and investigate the wide range of interesting activities available to them. They display high levels of independence and self-esteem and are happy to talk about their play. The children spend lengthy periods at self-chosen activities and the quality of their work is often of a high standard. Most of their paintings and models show close attention to detail and are often good representations of the world around them.
- Good behaviour management strategies are used to settle the children and as a result the children listen attentively and join in appropriately during the well planned and enjoyable group story and rhyme sessions. The children are developing a wide repertoire of rhymes and songs which is developing their oral communication skills and early mathematical concepts well.
- Many of the children engage in early mark making; are attempting to write their own names and readily engage in counting as they explore the materials on offer. They know the playroom routines, can choose resources independently and make good use of all the space available.
- All of the children engage in purposeful, concentrated play; they co-operate well with one another and with the adults. They are making good progress in all aspects of their learning; they often model language and learning as a result of their positive interactions with the staff. They make creative use of the learning resources; for example, they can access and store the resources independently, and demonstrate a growing sense of responsibility for their learning environment.

6. Provision for learning

- All of the staff are very skilful in their interactions with the children. They introduce mathematical concepts and ideas naturally through play. The staff encourage the children to persevere with their tasks to bring them to a conclusion. Often the staff use appropriate open-ended questions to foster the children's thinking skills and they provide them with additional resources to extend their language and learning.
- The staff work together effectively to develop the planning and have a systematic approach to observing the children at play and recording their responses. They create detailed reports which outline clearly the children's progress in learning and use the information to inform the planning to meet the needs of the children.
- The activities and resources on offer to the children are of a high quality. The room is stimulating and all areas of play are attractively presented to the children. Excellent use is made of books, posters and captions around the room to provide a literacy rich environment.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this pre-school centre is outstanding. The staff are very caring and respectful to the children and to one another. The positive relationships at all levels foster an inclusive and supportive family ethos. The children are at ease with the staff and turn to them readily for comfort, help and support.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and regular physical activity, which the children clearly enjoy.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work together effectively as a team in the best interest of the children. All of the staff have a caring approach and clearly enjoy their work with the children. The playgroup's development plan outlines appropriate targets for improvement. The staff make insightful evaluations of their practice and are able to demonstrate the improvements they have made in various aspects of their provision. There is evidence that this process has enhanced the overall provision and the children's learning experiences. The staff value the support provided by their early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation.
- The centre has a wide range of additional resources to support a progressive play programme to enhance the children's play and learning. Much attention has been given to the continuous professional development of the staff; there is evidence that their attendance at relevant courses is having a positive impact on their work and is enhancing the learning opportunities provided for the children. The staff undertake self-evaluation and have identified areas for further development.
- 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 Department.

8. Overall effectiveness

Carrowdore Early Years Centre 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.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CARROWDORE PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	20	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	20	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs		0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	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

* 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.	2
Average attendance for the previous year.	92%
Number of days open in previous school year	187

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	3 hours 15 minutes	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		7
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		1

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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