

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup,
Armagh

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
November 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

Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup is located in Clady, County Armagh. The children attending the part-time session come from a wide rural catchment area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	23
Funded by Department of Education	23
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4*	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	87
Number of days open in previous school year	180

Source: data provided by the setting.

* 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

A significant minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were positive. The parents commented in particular on their appreciation of the dedicated and caring staff and the positive impact that they are having on the children's learning and development. The staff praised the support of the management committee and the early years' specialist, in particular during their recent change of approach from using a commercial scheme to following the Northern Ireland Pre-school Curriculum Guidance. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from the management committee.

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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children are well-settled and are achieving good and very good standards across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They have good levels of independence as they: choose and access freely materials for play; follow confidently the established routines; and self-label their own work. The children respond well to the positive behaviour strategies used by the staff and are developing an appropriate awareness of their own behaviours and others' feelings and emotions.
- Most of the children produce good quality representational artwork and engage in a range of mark-making opportunities. They are attentive during the group story and participate enthusiastically with actions and voices of characters during familiar parts; a small number of children enjoy reading independently. The children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts associated with number and measures and use the sand timers appropriately when awaiting their turn.
- The children engage in physical, energetic play outdoors as they develop well their games skills and skills of pedalling, running and climbing. Almost all of the children have well-developed fine motor skills as they use small items of play equipment and manipulate with ease a range of tools at the dough, clay, writing and role-play areas of play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff work hard to maintain the appearance of the premises and have created an attractive learning environment which provides good and very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the curriculum. There is a stimulating range of recyclable, natural and commercial resources available to the children, in the indoor and small outdoor areas, which promotes the development of their independence and creativity. During outdoor physical play however, the organisation and planning of the session and availability of too many resources impeded the children's engagement in sustained, high quality play.
- The interactions between the staff and the children are consistently good and, at times, very good. The staff know the children well; they role model play skilfully and respond appropriately to the children's needs and interests.
- The staff have recently changed from using a commercial scheme for planning to a new approach which focuses more explicitly on the pre-school curriculum. The new short-term planning does not identify effectively enough both the intended learning and the role of the adult in supporting progression. The staff make appropriate observations of the children's learning; however insufficient use is made of these to inform future planning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The nurturing environment, consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour and effective working relationships promote the children's self-esteem, creativity and independence.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff are professional and enthusiastic and work well as a team; all are currently engaged in continuing professional development towards an accredited qualification. They are supported in all aspects of their work by the hard-working management committee and the newly-appointed early years' specialist.
- The staff are reflective practitioners and have developed an effective approach to self-evaluation leading to improvement which is supported appropriately by regular monitoring and evaluation and consultation.
- There are effective links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through, for example, an informative monthly newsletter, parent noticeboard and induction evening. The parents are involved in fundraising initiatives and also contribute to the children's learning experiences through, for example, reading or doing yoga with them.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. However, the playgroup needs to:

- ensure greater rigour in carrying out risk assessments for outings.

9. Overall effectiveness

Clady Tiny Tots Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There is an area for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is:

- to develop further the cycle of planning, evaluations and assessment to identify more effectively the learning needs of the children and plan appropriately to meet those needs.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Health and safety/accommodation

- The current modular building is nearing the end of its lifespan and there is a recurring problem with black mould on the ceiling of the playroom.

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 management¹:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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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