

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Dromara Pre-School and Playgroup, Dromara, County Down

Voluntary Pre-school DE Ref No (4BA-0178)

Report of an Inspection in April 2019



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

Dromara Pre-School and Playgroup is operates within modular accommodation situated in the grounds of Dromara Primary School. The pre-school facilitates both a part-time morning and an afternoon session. The children come mainly from the village and the surrounding area. For the last three years, the pre-school has not employed the services of an external early years' specialist; this role is undertaken by the leader who is also the proprietor.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	18	18
Funded by Department of Education	18	18
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	8.33
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

Most of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were extremely positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The parents' written comments praised the approachable and friendly staff who work closely with the parents to meet the children's individual needs and also emphasised excellent links that the playgroup has with the local primary school. All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. In particular, the staff appreciate the positive working environment created through supportive and effective leadership and teamwork and value the ongoing professional development opportunities. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and staff.

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	Very good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children are well-settled. They show good levels of independence; for example, they self-manage their snack routine, access the resources they need for their play, and put on their own boots and coats for outdoor play. The children engage confidently with adults and each other. During the inspection, a majority of children engaged in collaborative play in the role play and construction areas.
- Most of the children are curious about the world around them. They plant and grow vegetables and flowers, create race tracks in the construction area and investigate the resources in the playroom using binoculars, magnifying glasses and the digital camera. The children use confidently a range of scientific vocabulary to share their knowledge.
- Almost all of the children engage enthusiastically in rhymes and songs. They listen intently during story time and enjoy browsing books in the attractive library corner. Most of the children enjoy mark-making using a range of writing tools; the children's representational artwork on display in the playroom is of a very good quality. The children's creativity and music making skills are less well developed.
- The children have a very good awareness of number and the language associated with number, shape and space. They have well-developed fine motor skills and engage enthusiastically in energetic play.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are making good progress.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide an interesting and varied programme with good to very good learning experiences across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children's personal, social and emotional development, language development and the world around us are particular strengths of the provision. The arts, in particular the development of the children's creativity and opportunities for music making, requires further development.
- The staff have created an attractive and stimulating learning environment, making best use of the available space. There is a good range of natural, authentic and commercial resources which are well-labelled and readily accessible to the children.
- The staff interact sensitively and supportively with the children and ask effective questions which build on the children's interests and extend their vocabulary. They are proactive in identifying those children who are not engaging in purposeful play and work alongside them to model play.
- The staff take very good account of the children's interests and incorporate their ideas into the planning. While the short-term planning is detailed, the learning outcomes are too generic and do not sufficiently demonstrate progression within the six areas of learning throughout the year. The staff make regular observations of the children's learning and use these to inform planning; however, the current method used for recording the progression for each child across all six areas of the pre-school curriculum is not systematic enough. The planning for outdoor play requires further improvement; this has been identified appropriately by the staff.

- The staff have identified appropriately those children with additional needs and have begun to implement a range of strategies and resources to support them which are outlined clearly in the well-constructed individual education plans.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impact positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The clear and consistent approach to behaviour management results in a calm and purposeful learning environment for all the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership of the provision is good. The staff are collegial, conscientious and child-centred and a high priority is placed on their continuous professional development. The recent staff training on special educational needs has impacted positively on the children's language and communication skills. The leader has identified appropriately the need to seek out regular opportunities to meet and share best practice with other pre-school providers.
- Through self-evaluation, the staff have identified appropriate areas for development. Recent improvement work on developing the world around us has impacted positively on the learning experiences on offer to the children. The current action plans do not focus sufficiently on the impact of the improvement work on the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children. There is currently no three-year development plan in place.
- The staff have very good links with the parents who are kept well-informed about their children's progress. Regular and informative newsletters provide good information about the work of the pre-school.
- Throughout the year, the staff invite a wide range of visitors to the pre-school and facilitate visits to businesses and places of interest in the local community which enrich and extend the children's learning across the well-chosen topics and themes. There are very effective links with the local primary school which support the children as they progress to the next stage of their education.

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

Dromara Pre-School and Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to monitor more systematically the progression of each child's learning across all areas of the curriculum;
- to develop further the planning and provision for the arts and outdoor play; and

- to develop further self-evaluation to demonstrate clearly the impact of improvement work on the provision for learning and outcomes for 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; 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

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 impacts positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

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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