

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dungiven Community
Playgroup, Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
December 2014

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning 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 discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The parents and the staff who responded to the questionnaire were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup.

2. Context

Dungiven Community Playgroup is situated in purpose built accommodation in a housing development in the town of Dungiven. Most of the staff are in post since the last inspection in 2009. There is one new member of staff. The programme provided is based on the HighScope methodology which is that the children construct their own learning by doing and being involved in working with materials, people and ideas. Since September 2014 the staff have introduced an additional afternoon session with funded places to cater for the increase in requests for pre-school places in the local area.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are content and well-settled, and their behaviour is exemplary. They are familiar and very co-operative with the routines of the HighScope programme. Most of the children are effectively developing their independence and social skills.
- The children's oral language and communication skills are variable and range from being well-developed to aspects that require ongoing adult support to improve. The children are willing to engage in conversation; they readily turn to the adults and can share and turn-take during role play and snack-time. Most of children's early mark making is developing at an appropriate pace. They are able to express their ideas through early representational drawings and paintings and these are mounted in colourful displays around the playgroup setting. The children turn to books with interest, listen very attentively to stories and are encouraged at times to recall familiar stories. The children would benefit from more frequent opportunities for singing and rhymes to develop further their language skills.
- The quality of most of the children's mathematical language is good and they have a well developed understanding of the associated mathematical concepts about pattern, numbers and spatial awareness.
- The children's physical fine motor skills are being developed effectively and the staff have appropriately identified the need to develop planning and the provision of associated resources to identify progression in the development of the children's gross motor skills.

6. Provision

- The staff create a warm and safe learning environment. There is a supportive and caring family ethos in the playgroup based on excellent relationships at all levels. The staff readily praise the children in an appropriate way for their achievements and develop effectively their confidence and self-esteem.
- The daily timetable requires a better balance between the time available for the children to make decisions and for them to develop concentrated play. During the inspection, there were some missed opportunities to engage the children in exploration and investigation of the activities and resources. The large and small group time, and the snack and transitions between the activities are developed effectively to provide good learning opportunities across most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The quality of staff interaction is often good to very good particularly when the children's ideas are valued and their language and learning extended. The staff encourage the children's independence to access resources and in the best practice model language for the children to develop their understanding of learning across the curriculum. The staff need to build on this good practice and develop a shared understanding of utilising learning opportunities more consistently across all areas of the curriculum to meet the children's wide range of individual needs.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide an attractive and stimulating environment that helps the children to grow in confidence.
- The staff work effectively as a team to plan together and evaluate the quality of the provision. They have devised a range of planning documents to provide a broad programme of learning which is underpinned by the HighScope approach. The assessments of the children's progress and the learning potential of the resources need to be identified more clearly in the written planning to guide more consistently the quality of the staff interaction and to ensure progression in all areas of learning.
- The provision for the children with additional needs is meeting well their behavioural and early language developmental needs. The staff record and track the children's progress and use the information to identify and seek support for the children with additional needs.
- The playgroup gives good attention to healthy eating and there are plans to extend further the provision for physical activity.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a shared team approach to the development of the pre-school programme. The leader and the staff have worked tirelessly and with great commitment to meet the demand in the local area for additional pre-school places by offering a second daily afternoon session. The management committee, the leader and the staff are clearly focused on meeting the needs of the children and have recently completed a self-evaluation of the playgroup provision using the ETI Together Towards Improvement quality indicators and have identified appropriate areas for improvement. It will be important to revise the development plan to take account of the findings of the inspection. In addition, all of the policies and procedures which guide the playgroup development planning need to be kept under review and shared with the parents and the management group.
- The parents are fully involved in the life and work of the playgroup. Most of the children transfer to three local primary school and relevant information about the children's progress is provided to the year one teachers.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation provides very good support to develop the provision. The EYS cluster support is effectively building the capacity of the staff in the local playgroup sector to sustain ongoing improvement. The EYS has appropriately identified the need to develop further the processes of self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement.
- 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 broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- ensure that the organisation of the day, the planning and the staff interaction support more consistently the children's learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the playgroup's progress on the areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	24	16
In their immediate pre-school year	24	16
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	16
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	-	-
with a statement of special educational needs	1	1
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	2
with English as an additional language	0	0
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	85%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	1	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	1	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
2½ hours	2½ hours	188

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