

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Flutterbies Playgroup, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
February 2015

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
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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 settings, 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 or to meet with the inspection team.

Twenty-seven percent of the parents responded to the questionnaire and a small number of them provided additional written comments. The responses were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the setting's work. The responses from the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses including a summary of the written responses have been shared with the staff and the management of the pre-school setting.

2. Context

Flutterbies Playgroup is accommodated in the Cregagh Methodist Church hall, Belfast. The hall is multi-use and as such, the playgroup resources and equipment must be set up and cleared away at the beginning and end of each session; the playgroup has no outdoor space. This is the first inspection of the setting since they entered the pre-school expansion programme in September 2012.

3. Focus of 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	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and focus very purposefully in sustained play. They access independently the learning and play resources they require and are confident in the playroom and with the routines of the day. The children are developing good social interactions and play collaboratively in the home corner and in the large construction area.
- Almost all of the children have good language skills and are keen and confident in engaging with adults. For example, they can explain clearly what they have made in their art and construction play. All of the children can label their own work and most can recognise their own names. The children are confident in using scissors and show a good interest in early mark making. They follow instructions well when taking part in the obstacle course and enjoy taking part in large and small group story sessions.
- While a number of the children are showing an interest in counting, numbers and letters it is important that the activities provided do not become too formal for their age and stage of development.

6. Provision

- The staff work extremely hard to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment in the large hall and they constantly review their organisation to make the best use of all of the space. The daily routines provide very good opportunities for the children to develop their independence and provide the children with a long period of uninterrupted free play.
- The staff interactions with the children are always at least satisfactory and on a few occasions they are good. In the best practice, the staff used open-ended questions and extended the children's problem-solving skills by encouraging them to investigate and observe. Very good use is made of photographs to encourage an interest and investigation of brick patterns in the construction area. To improve further, the staff need to develop their interactions with the children to ensure they are of a consistently high quality throughout the whole session in order to exploit more fully the opportunities for learning.
- The staff have appropriately been developing their planning and assessment methods. While the plans focus well on the learning to be developed and provide guidance for the staff on the role of the adult, there is a need for the staff to develop further their understanding of the progression in learning in the pre-school curriculum. This is necessary to ensure that the staff have appropriate expectations for the children's age and stage of development, particularly in the areas of early mathematics and language and communication.
- The staff make regular observations of the children across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They are beginning to use well their reflections on the children's learning and interests to inform future planning. The broad and balanced programme provides good opportunities for learning across most areas of the pre-school curriculum.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. There is a friendly, welcoming ethos in the playgroup. The children are well-behaved and are encouraged to share and take turns. The staff have been able to find creative approaches to celebrate the children's work and achievements in displays in the multi-use hall by making good use of the wooden shutters at the windows.
- The playgroup promotes healthy eating and physical activity, for example the healthy break. There is a need for the staff to review their planning and resources to ensure that the children have sufficient regular opportunities to engage in energetic physical play.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader has a clear vision, is highly motivated and has demonstrated a strong commitment to the continued development of the playgroup. There is a good team approach developing among the staff and the leader is a good role-model in her practice. The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation has provided good, focused support for the playgroup.
- There is an outline three-year development plan in place and the staff have begun to use self-evaluation to inform improvement planning. It will be important for the staff, with the support of their EYS, to continue to develop their confidence and understanding in the use of self-evaluation to develop and improve the quality of the provision in the playgroup so that all of the children achieve to their full potential. The management committee are not sufficiently involved in leading and managing the playgroup and there is an urgent need for them to become more proactive in this important work.
- The playgroup has established good links with the parents and the email newsletter provides good information on the life and work of the playgroup. In developing this further, the staff should also include more detailed information for parents on the current learning focus and also how they can support their child's learning at home. The staff make good use of a 'Buddy Bear' programme to develop the home-school link for children. Each of the children take turns in bringing the bear home and then they share their adventures with the other children. The staff make very good use of a wide range of visitors to the setting and this enhances well the children's educational experiences.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments but the following area needs to be addressed urgently:
 - there is a need to nominate a named person on the management committee with responsibility for child protection and to ensure that they access the relevant training.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school setting is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The areas for improvement include the need for the staff:

- to develop further their understanding of the pre-school curriculum and to plan more effectively for the children's progression in learning across it;
- to develop their interactions with the children to ensure they are of a consistently high quality throughout the whole session, in order to exploit more fully the opportunities for learning; and
- to continue, with the support of their EYS, to develop their confidence and understanding in the use of self-evaluation to develop and improve the quality of the provision in the playgroup so that all of the children achieve to their full potential.

The ETI will monitor and report on the pre-school setting's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION FLUTTERBIES PLAYGROUP

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	22	
in their immediate pre-school year	22	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	22	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	2	
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	
with English as an additional language	5	
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	14	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	80.8%
Number of days open in previous school year	191

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
3 hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader		4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within previous 12 months		1

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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