

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Happy Feet Playgroup,
Comber, County Down

Report of an Inspection in
June 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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 playgroup:

The playgroup 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.
The playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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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 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 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 confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were wholly positive.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest 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

Happy Feet Playgroup is located in a mobile in the grounds of St Mary's Primary School in Comber. The facilities are shared daily with an after schools group. The children attending the playgroup transfer to variety of primary schools in the local area including St Mary's Primary School.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children are very well settled and spend lengthy periods engaging in purposeful and concentrated play. Their independence and self-management skills are very good and they respond positively to the well established routines of the playgroup. The children interact well with each other and with the staff and visitors, and take pride in their work and achievements. They enjoy books, access them independently and listen attentively to individual and group stories. The children who require support with aspects of their learning are very well integrated into the group and are making good progress.
- The children demonstrate a keen interest in the well planned and thoughtfully presented activities; they produce detailed representational work that is age and stage appropriate, take part in topical role play scenarios, and make very good use of the available resources. They are developing well their fine motor skills through the use of a wide variety of tools and equipment available throughout the playroom and engage enthusiastically in physical, energetic play outdoors. The children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts, such as number, measures and positional language and confidently use mathematical language during play.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff create a stimulating and child-centred learning environment. The available space is used very effectively to encourage the children's independence and their self-management skills, and to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is consistently of a very high quality. The staff model play and effectively use open-ended questions to extend the children's thinking and to develop their language and problem solving skills.
- The comprehensive planning is informed well by the rigorous system of observation and assessment of the children's responses and indicates progression and challenge in their learning.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack for the children and an appropriate period for energetic physical play outdoors.
- The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. There is a welcoming, respectful ethos which impacts on the work of the playgroup. The staff know the children very well, and respond sensitively to their needs and interests.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a collaborative team approach within the playgroup and a commitment by all the staff to provide high quality learning experiences for the children. The leader is supported very well by the skilful staff and management committee in all areas of the life and work of the playgroup. The staff's positive approach to self-evaluation has led to improvements in all areas of the playgroup's provision.

- Effective links have been established with the parents who are very supportive of the work of the playgroup. Valuable links have also been established with feeder primary schools, other early years' practitioners and support agencies for the benefit of the children.
- The playgroup employs the services of an independent early years specialist to support the staff in their work. Both parties reported excellent working relationships which contribute to the high quality provision for the children.
- 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 Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Happy Feet Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HAPPY FEET PLAYGROUP, COMBER, COUNTY DOWN

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	23
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	8
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	***
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	5
With English as an additional language	***
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	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.

*** fewer than 5

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average attendance for the previous year.	87%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	09.00 am-12.00 pm	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		1
New appointments within the previous 12 months		1

Number of: ****	
Students	***
Trainees	***

**** Total placements since September of current year

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