

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Little Hands Pre-school,  
Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in  
October 2018

*eti*

The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



# CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	4

## **Appendices**

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

## 1. Context

Little Hands Pre-school is located in the Parkhall Complex in Antrim. In addition to the large playroom, there are two small outdoor play areas, one has recently been renovated. The children attending the pre-school come from the local surrounding area. Since the last inspection, the number of newcomer children has slightly increased.

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>
Attending part-time	14
Funded by Department of Education	14
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#
With English as an additional language	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	65
Number of days open in previous school year	185

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\* 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

N/A not available

## 2. Views of parents and staff

A very small number of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about all aspects of the playgroup. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and the chairperson 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Important areas for improvement

## **5. Outcomes for learners**

- A minority of the children have limited concentration and require adult support to help them sustain their play and develop an interest in their activities. Most of the children are well-settled, and are developing well their independence; a majority can self-register, organise their snack and choose free play activities with growing confidence. A minority of children are not developing adequately their social skills and fine motor skills during snack.
- A majority of the children are attaining expected outcomes across the six areas of learning for this time of year. The children are naturally inquisitive about the world around them and are benefitting from the new resources in the recently renovated outdoor play area. They enjoy spending time investigating the properties of natural materials such as sand, water and soil.
- A majority of the children can recognise numerals and recite number rhymes, but the language of shape, weight, length and capacity is under developed as an integral part of their play.
- Most of the children communicate their thoughts and ideas freely to the staff and each other. A minority of the children have been identified with speech and language difficulties, they are making limited progress. The children enjoy stories; almost all listen attentively, are interested and have a good recall of the story. A small number of children engage in purposeful mark-making. A minority of children played with instruments and are developing a sense of rhythm and movement. The children's creativity and interest in art is underdeveloped.
- The newcomer children and those who require additional support are well-integrated into the playgroup.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The planning does not provide adequate detail, across the pre-school curriculum, to guide the staff in understanding the learning inherent in the play activities and to plan for spontaneous play. Although the staff make regular observations of the children's learning and assessments of progress made, these assessments are not used effectively enough to inform future planning to meet the needs of the children.
- The staff have created an attractive, stimulating, well-resourced playroom that enables children to independently access resources for play. The newly refurbished outdoor play area provides opportunities for investigative play, however, the planning for outdoor play is not adequate to guide the staff in providing appropriate opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. There is limited provision for developing the children's gross motor skills in the small outdoor play area.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is good at times but is inconsistent. The staff use open-ended questions but there are often missed opportunities to develop the children's thinking skills and ability to solve problems, and to expand the children's vocabulary during spontaneous play. The rules and routines are not applied consistently, consequently transitions are too long, children are restless and a significant minority are not participating fully in tidying up areas of play.

- The children who require additional help with their learning are identified early but are not supported sufficiently to make adequate progress in their learning by individual educational plans.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare does not impact positively enough on all aspects of learning, teaching and outcomes. Each child is valued as an individual and the children are at ease with the caring staff, however, positive behaviour strategies are not promoted consistently enough in the setting.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management of the provision has important areas for improvement. The use of self-evaluation processes are underdeveloped. The development plan has correctly identified some areas for improvement; however, the action plans lack sufficient detail and focus to guide the staff on the specific actions required to fully bring about improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for the children. The staff have limited understanding of using self-evaluation systematically, to reflect on the quality of the provision. The staff and management committee have identified the need to review the allocation of time for the staff to meet and embed further the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement.
- The independent early years specialist has provided good support to the staff leading to the appropriate re-organisation of the playroom, improved supervisory ratios and the development of good parental links.
- The management committee support the staff well in their work and through fundraising. The current system for reviewing, updating and ratifying safeguarding policies by the staff and management committee is not effective.
- There are good links with appropriate external agencies, parents and the local community. There are positive transition links with the local primary school. The introduction of the 'Big Bedtime Read' initiative is working well in developing effective home/pre-school links by providing books for parents to use at home to help their children learn.

## **8. Safeguarding**

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory.

The areas which must be improved urgently include:

- making the building secure at all times;
- storing all sensitive safeguarding information securely; and
- updating all key policies and risk assessments in line with the guidance from the relevant departments.

## 9. Overall effectiveness

Little Hands Pre-school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the quality of planning and observation of children's learning;
- to address the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding; and
- to develop rigorous self-evaluation and associated action planning, in order to bring about, improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

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 in 12 to 18 months.

The ETI will also return to the playgroup within six weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education will seek assurance from the relevant authority that they are working with the playgroup in relation to the inspection report.

### 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 chairperson of 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 management<sup>2</sup>:

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## **ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF LITTLE HANDS PRE-SCHOOL IN OCTOBER 2018**

### **SAFEGUARDING**

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the ETI returned to Little Hands Pre-School on 7 December 2018 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on the 15 October 2018; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

During the interim period, the school had received support from the Independent Early Years Organisation.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2018

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)