

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Nippers Alley Playgroup,
Loughmacrory, County Tyrone

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2018



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

Nippers Alley Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation with an outdoor area and is situated within the grounds of St Teresa's Primary School, Loughmacrory. The majority of the staff are in post since the last inspection in June 2012.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	25
Funded by Department of Education	25
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	8
With English as an additional language	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	98
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

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses were very positive about almost all aspects of the provision; including the leadership, the care provided by the staff and the progress being made by the children. The staff responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. All of the responses have been shared with the leadership and management.

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	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children are well settled and play with purpose and concentration. All of the children are confident to turn to the staff for help or support to develop their play. A minority of the children have limited concentration and aspects of their levels of independence and sense of responsibility are underdeveloped for the time of year and their stages of development.
- The children's interest in singing and books is highly developed and they are confident to play the musical instruments, to follow simple rhythms and to sing along during play about the jungle animals. They engage fully in the large group story and music session. The children have developed a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes that are greatly enhancing their early language and mathematical development. The children create drawings and mark making which is appropriately detailed for the time of year.
- The children have a very good awareness of their world around them. During the inspection, they were excited by the real snow which they enjoyed observing, investigating and exploring in the outdoor area and they developed their understanding of caring for living things as they prepared food to feed the birds.
- The children have a very good knowledge and understanding of size and made comparisons of the different materials and used a good range of mathematical and scientific language to explain differences. Most of the children have a very good understanding of the concepts of sorting, matching and counting.
- The children with additional needs have positive relationships with the staff and are well integrated within the group; they are making the expected progress particularly in listening and understanding language.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have created a very well-resourced and stimulating learning environment which includes an attractive outdoor play area. The playroom is divided into distinct play areas with appropriate space for the children to develop rich learning experiences and to access resources to extend their play. The children's work is valued and celebrated in many interesting displays within the playroom.
- The staff observe and record of the children's progress and development. There are several planning formats which show that there are a variety of activities and themes planned for the six areas of learning; however, the short-term planning does not clearly identify the learning inherent within the activities and resources. The detailed observations of the children's learning are not sufficiently informing the planned programme to meet the various stages of the children's development.
- The organisation of the day provides for lengthy periods of indoor and outdoor play and the children are secure in the smooth transitions for outdoor play and story time. The staff are appropriately reviewing the snack routine in order to ensure that it operates without disrupting play and that the opportunities for mathematical learning are fully developed.

- The quality of interactions between the staff and the children range from those that are skilful and high quality, to a few instances of interaction where opportunities to promote learning were missed. A key strength of the high quality interactions observed, is the promotion of language and learning through incidental play opportunities that build on the children's interests. This best practice should be shared to ensure that all interactions between the children and the staff are of a consistently high quality to promote learning, particularly in aspects of the personal, social and emotional curricular area.
- The staff have benefited from training to support children with additional needs. They use an appropriate range of strategies to support those children who are experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning. The speech, language and communication strategies are a key strength.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on their learning and development. The children are forming positive relationships with the adults and one another which is evident in their developing personal and social skills.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the playgroup is good at all levels. The staff are a collegial and effective team and have introduced a range of monitoring and evaluation initiatives. They are currently using a self-evaluation tool to support the continuous development of the pre-school programme.
- The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation, the management committee and the staff have brought about significant improvements in the learning environment and the development of the resources for the curriculum. A new early years specialist has been appointed to support the playgroup and it will be important that the findings of the inspection report are used to adjust the development plan priorities and that the associated action plans have clearer baselines and specific targets that can be monitored to show the impact on the children's learning.
- The staff have established links with the local Sure Start to share information on transition to the playgroup. They report that a small number of the children attending the playgroup have improved social and communication skills gained through their attendance of the Sure Start programme.
- The playgroup has established effective links with the parents, relevant agencies and the main feeder primary schools for the benefit of the children. Information about the children's progress and development is recorded and is shared at key times throughout the year with the parents. The parents are informed through newsletters about activities and songs to help their children to learn.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. There is a need to define the areas of abuse in the safeguarding policy and to develop further the risk assessments for outings in line with the Department of Education requirements.

9. Overall effectiveness

Nippers Alley Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all children.

The playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address the following area for improvement.

- The staff need to ensure that all interactions between the children and the staff are of a consistently high quality to engage a minority of the children in more concentrated and independent learning.

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, including a representative 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:

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 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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