

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Safe 'n' Sound Day Nursery,
Ballynahinch, County Down

Report of an Inspection in
June 2016



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 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 and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Twenty-eight percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires. All of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The very small number of written comments highlighted the good progress of the children and the very good use of visitors to the setting. The staff responses were wholly positive. The ETI has reported to the playgroup leader and to the proprietor of the day nursery the main messages emerging from the parental and staff questionnaires; no issues or concerns were raised.

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

Safe 'n' Sound Day Nursery is a privately operated childcare facility situated in the village of Ballynahinch, County Down. The day nursery operates a pre-school playgroup with access to a large outdoor area. This is the first inspection of the playgroup since they entered the Pre-school Expansion Programme.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very confident and well-settled; they play purposefully for prolonged periods and can initiate and sustain independently their play. There are very good levels of collaborative play evident; the children are building good friendships and social skills. They access independently the resources they need and follow well the routines of the playgroup.
- Almost all of the children have very good oral language and, during the inspection, groups of children took on roles within the puppet theatre and in the role-play area. They recognise their name and a small number are showing an interest in writing independently their name. The children show an interest in books and stories and good use was made of a photographic booklet recounting a recent trip.
- The children show a good interest in early mathematical activities and, during the inspection, they engaged enthusiastically in play activities involving capacity and measures. They show an interest in numbers and counting, are developing well their use and understanding of early mathematical language, and recognise and name a range of shapes.
- The children use their senses well to explore the properties of a range of natural resources including the seaweed, vegetable, herbs and other plants available both indoors and outdoors.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff provide a bright and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors; very good use is made of all available space. The routines in the playgroup ensure effective transitions across the day and develop well the children's independence. The broad and balanced programme presents good opportunities for learning across almost all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children's creative art opportunities are limited and do not extend sufficiently the children's self-expression nor the quality of their representational paintings and drawings.
- The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently good quality and in some instances are very good; effective questioning is used well to encourage a problem-solving approach. The staff provide appropriate levels of support and respond well to the interests of the children allowing them to take the lead and explore.
- The regular and relevant observations of the children's learning are used well to inform the weekly planning and the weekly staff meetings ensure that all staff are aware of the targets and approaches for individual children. The staff evaluate the weekly planning and both the interests and needs of the children are reflected in future planning; the system is effective. The current long-term planning lacks sufficient continuous progression in learning across the pre-school curriculum and does not contain appropriate challenge for the more able children.

- The playgroup has good links with the health visitor for advice and guidance in supporting children with special educational needs. The staff have also attended professional development in special educational needs facilitated by the Education Authority. The children identified with speech and language difficulties have been given additional support by the staff through small group language work and have made progress in their speech and language.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. There is a welcoming, friendly ethos with high levels of mutual respect amongst the staff and children. The children respond well to the positive behaviour strategies implemented consistently by the staff and as a result they are very well-behaved, look after the equipment and resources well, and can take on roles, such as, leader which involves assisting in the preparation of the healthy snack.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the provision of a healthy snack, the good opportunities for energetic physical activity and the focus on hygiene and sun safety messages.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work well collaboratively with effective teamwork and a commitment to the continued improvement and development of the playgroup. The staff have a good understanding of both development planning processes and self-evaluation, and have brought about key improvements within the playgroup including the development of the outdoor play provision and the increased involvement of parents, in the current year. They monitor and evaluate the progress and impact regularly of their action plans, across the year. Very good quality support is provided for the playgroup through their early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation.
- The playgroup has very good links with the parents and they are kept well-informed about their child's progress. The monthly newsletters provide good information on the life and work of the setting and on the learning focus for the month. In developing these further, the staff should include information for the parents on how they can support their child's learning at home. There are monthly parent-mornings which allow the parents to visit the playgroup and play alongside their child. A large number of parents have visited the playgroup to share information about their jobs. Good use is also made of a range of educational trips to enhance the children's learning experiences.
- The playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Safe 'n' Sound Day Nursery 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; in particular, the need to make better use of long-term planning to ensure more continuous progression in learning across the pre-school curriculum with appropriate challenge for the more able children.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SAFE 'N' SOUND DAY NURSERY PLAYGROUP,
BALLYNAHINCH**

1. Details of children

Number of children:	
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	18
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	18
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	***
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	0
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.

*** Denotes a number less than 5.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	12
Average attendance for the previous year.	97%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9:00 am-11:30 am	

3. Details of staff

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

Number of: ****	
Students	0
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

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