

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Pre-School
Playgroup, Coleraine,
County Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
June 2017

eti

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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Malachy's Pre-School Playgroup is accommodated within the Pastoral Centre in St Malachy's Parish Coleraine. The children attending the playgroup come from the local area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	25
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	19
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**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#
With English as an additional language	6

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	76
Average attendance for the previous year.	95%
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 parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Almost all of the responses were highly positive about the provision including how much the children enjoyed their learning experiences and how well they are prepared for their next stage of education.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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	Very Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very well settled and are respectful to each other and to staff. They show very good levels of independence and most play collaboratively with each other for sustained periods of time. The younger children are gaining confidence and progressing well in line with their age and stage of development. Those who require support with aspects of their learning are integrated well and are making very good progress.
- The children are keenly interested in and enjoy a wide range of books during free play; they listen attentively at story time and respond well to questions. Their early mark-making and representational drawings are well developed. Most of the children understand simple mathematical concepts well and use mathematical language confidently across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- Outdoors, the children participate enthusiastically in a wide range of physical, energetic play activities. They benefit very well from opportunities to explore the natural environment and to investigate with authentic materials.

6. Quality of provision

- The attractive and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment is organised well with clear and distinct areas for play enabling the children's independent access of materials. The children's artwork and creations are valued and displayed prominently in the centre.
- The quality of the staff interactions are of a very good quality. They respond promptly and appropriately to the children's needs and interests and extend their thinking and understanding well with purposeful reflection and open-ended questioning.
- The staff work collaboratively to plan a broad, balanced educational programme covering all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The provision includes purposeful trips within the local community and visitors to the playgroup setting. Planning and observation information are not linked well enough to ensure clear progression in all areas of the children's learning. However, the staff, in conjunction with the independent early years specialist, have identified appropriately the need to improve this aspect of their work.
- The staff identify the children who require support with aspects of their learning promptly and individual education plans outlining targets are in place. There is appropriate focus on developing purposeful links with relevant agencies to foster a collaborative approach to the support being provided.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. A caring inclusive ethos influences the work of the playgroup; the staff know the children very well and respond positively to their needs and interests.

7. Leadership and management

- A collegial and positive approach to leadership is developing well and the staff and management committee have effectively managed a challenging and uncertain period including staff changes. The impact of the independent early years specialist has been very positive; in conjunction with the staff, work is progressing well towards embedding the process of self-evaluation to promote improvement. The centre's development plan outlines agreed areas for improvement; it is appropriate that staff have identified that the associated action plans are not well enough linked to the children's learning outcomes.
- The playgroup has established effective links with the parents; the informative newsletter and involvement in the Big Bedtime Read contribute to promoting parents involvement in their children's learning.
- The management committee are kept well informed about the playgroup, and contribute effectively to its life and work.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

St Malachy's Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The playgroup needs to improve the way in which planning and assessment lead to better learning outcomes.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

Part-time: am
9.00-12.00 noon

Details of staff

Number of:	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	1
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1

Number of: *	
Students	2
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.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 board of governors; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting 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 outcomes, 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 school:

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

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