

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Woodburn Playgroup,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
November 2017



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

Woodburn Playgroup is accommodated in Oakfield Community Centre, a shared community building on the outskirts of Carrickfergus. The staff are required to set out and clear away equipment on a daily basis. A small number of younger fee-paying children attend the pre-school session and there is an increasing trend in the number of children being identified with a range of additional needs. Since the last inspection two new staff and a new independent early years specialist have been appointed.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	26
Under 3 years of age	#
Funded by Department of Education	14
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**	5
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year	100%
Average attendance in previous year	93.5%
Number of days open in previous school year	188

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

The questionnaire response from the parents were wholly positive about all aspects of the provision. Their responses highlighted a high level of appreciation for the work of the staff team and their excellent attention to the individual needs of each child.

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	High level of capacity
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are progressing very well across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They are becoming highly independent learners with very positive attitudes to their learning.
- The children settle quickly to their activities and sustain high levels of involvement in their play. They respond very well to the daily routines and visual cues which guide them very effectively to make independent choices, take care of their learning environment and develop their social skills. The children collaborate and help each other during their play.
- The children are developing very well their attention and listening skills during large and focused smaller group sessions. They communicate confidently with the staff and one another, describe what they are doing, ask questions and use an increasing vocabulary. The children enjoy browsing both fictional stories and simple factual books with adults and each other. They are beginning to understand that print has meaning and are interested in mark making and making patterns. The children are beginning to use simple mathematical language to describe size and shape; they have a very good understanding of the sequence of the daily timetable and know how to use a timer to support taking turns.
- The children use the wide range of art materials, dough and construction materials with independence to initiate and develop their own imaginative ideas. They make patterns, design simple models and paint and draw early representational pictures in response to the world around them. They engage in well-developed imaginative role play in the home area and mud kitchen, re-enacting familiar family roles.
- The children explore their learning environment with curiosity and enjoy investigating the real and natural materials on the interest table and in their play. They experiment with music and sound using the instruments and introduction of songs and expand their learning further through the interesting range of visitors, such as the African drummers.
- The children identified with additional needs are making very good progress in developing their social skills, and in using personalised visual cues to support their independent choices and decision-making.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff set up, on a daily basis, a very attractive and stimulating learning environment with well-resourced areas of play within the playroom and outdoors. The very attractive displays of the children's own art work, meaningful labelling and natural materials all enhance the environment. The current development of the outdoor area and review of the resources for water and sand play will improve the range of learning experiences further.
- Planning and assessment are of a very high quality. The very detailed planning is reviewed regularly, evaluated effectively and linked closely to the assessment information. As a result the planned pre-school programme provides rich and meaningful experiences that are very well matched to the needs and interests of individual children. The very high level of effective planned support for individual children with additional needs and the skill of the staff to implement this planning consistently are key strengths of this playgroup.

- The staff are very skilful in their interactions to promote learning and foster very warm, nurturing and respectful working relationships with the children. They promote productive play, listen to the children carefully, support well their own creative ideas and extend their language and thinking consistently throughout the session.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup is led, organised and managed very effectively. The leader, staff team, independent early years specialist and committee work collaboratively with a clear vision of providing high quality pre-school education. The continuous professional development of each staff member through both internal and external training and support is having a very positive impact on building the capacity and effectiveness of the staff team.
- The staff all contribute to regular review of their practice, consult parents regularly about their provision and accurately identify their own strengths and the relevant priorities for further development. Their action plans are well focused on the outcomes in learning for the children; establishing a clearer baseline position would help to measure the progress more clearly. There is evidence of ongoing improvement in the quality of the provision, staff skill and outcomes for the children over a sustained period. It is important that the staff are provided with sufficient time and resources to maintain this high quality of work.
- There are very effective links with parents, schools, local pre-schools and the wider community. Parents are kept well informed about the playgroup, and their child's progress and encouraged to participate in relevant playgroup activities; their views and contributions are valued. Personalised booklets and close links with staff from local schools help the children to make smooth transitions into their next stage of education.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

Woodburn Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

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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 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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