

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Killean Playgroup, Newry,  
County Down

Report of an inspection in  
May 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 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 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.

# Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4
Appendix	

## 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.

The responses to the confidential questionnaire by the parents were very positive about the pre-school. In particular, the parents reported their appreciation of the good organisation of the group, the progress of their children and the valuable asset they are in the local community.

## 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

Killean Playschool is accommodated in a purpose built centre which is situated in the rural location of Killean, Newry. The transfer of children during their pre-school year to the composite year one and Reception class in the adjoining primary school has a negative impact on funding arrangements for the pre-school.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are developing very well as confident and independent learners. They are progressing very well in the areas of the pre-school curriculum and clearly enjoy their learning.
- The children work well together and show respect for one another, the staff and their environment. They co-operate confidently during the daily routines, self-manage their snack and can initiate and develop their play very well for sustained periods.
- The pre-school children use their very communication and language skills very well during lively discussions about their play and own experiences with each other and the staff. They listen very attentively during the group story sessions, respond to the text and enjoy browsing through books independently or with a friend. There is a high level of interest in print and emergent writing which the children use in meaningful contexts, such as, the shop role-play and self-registration.
- The children show a well developed understanding of early mathematical concepts and use the associated language in play contexts and during songs and rhymes. They count items in the shop, make independent comparison of size using the height chart, explore pattern through a range of appropriate activities and positional language during physical play.
- The children's imaginative role-play is very well developed and sustained for considerable periods by both the girls and the boys. The children paint regularly and are developing simple representational work relating to their topics. They have free access to a creative area which they use to make, for example, simple collage work.
- The children are developing appropriately their fine motor skills as they use a range of finer materials and use tools such as knives to butter their own bread at snack time, brushes, pencils and scissors. The children are well co-ordinated as they practise their physical movement skills outdoors while aiming and throwing balls, jumping and balancing over an obstacle course or pedalling tricycles.
- The children use their senses to explore and investigate the natural materials available through the playroom for sustained periods. They water the plants, experiment with how play equipment works and build detailed models with construction materials.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The attractive and stimulating learning environment is well resourced and is laid out into distinct areas for play with well-labelled storage to promote the children's own choices and autonomy in learning. While the staff make very good use of all of the available space for learning in the playroom and the small outdoor space, the plans to enlarge the area for outdoor learning will provide potentially improved facilities for the children to develop further their play experiences.

- The consistently high quality of the staff interactions to support the children's language and learning is a key strength of the provision. The staff listen attentively to the children, model mathematical language and relevant vocabulary and build very effectively on the children's ideas. They engage effectively the small number of children who still require adult support with aspects of their learning.
- The planned programme is evaluated regularly and provides very good to excellent opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff need to plan for a broader range of open-ended creative art experiences to progress further the children's creativity. The staff make relevant observations and assessments of the children's responses and use this information to inform parents of their child's progress and achievements. The staff have identified appropriately the need to use this information more fully to progress individual children in their learning.
- The staff need to develop further their skills and understanding to implement effectively a more detailed policy for early identification and intervention for children identified with additional needs.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. The staff provide a caring and nurturing learning environment. The children are caring and respectful to one another and are developing very well their social skills; their behaviour is very good.
- The healthy fruit break, curricular focus on dental health and healthy foods along with, the opportunities for energetic physical play help to promote a healthy lifestyle.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership, management and staff team are reflective in their practice and have a clear vision for the continuous improvement of the provision. There is evidence of ongoing improvements in the quality of the learning environment and staff interaction. The staff value the role of the parents and keep them informed about their children's progress. There are effective links with the people from the local community who visit the playschool and talk to the children about their roles.
- The support from the early years specialist has lacked sufficient continuity and focus. It is important that the early years specialist, committee and staff work together to review and improve their written action plans. In particular, to link the staff development to the key priority areas and monitor more fully the impact of the actions to the impact more fully on the children's learning.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following areas need to be addressed:
  - the deputy designated officer for child protection needs to complete her training; and
  - the procedures for intimate care need to be documented more clearly in the policy.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

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

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON KILLEAN PLAYSCHOOL, NEWRY

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	26
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	23
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
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	3

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	1
Average attendance for the previous year.	87.5%
Number of days open in previous school year	189

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	09:00 am-12:30 pm	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within the previous 12 months		1

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year



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