

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare,
Co Antrim

Report of an inspection in
October 2013

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning 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, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	20	5	25% ¹	*
Staff	*	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

The majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The staff and management committee were positive about almost all aspects of the playgroup. Any concerns raised have been shared with the leader and representative of the management committee.

2. Context

Kilbride Playgroup is situated in the town land of Burnside, approximately three miles from Ballyclare, County Antrim. The playgroup operates within a local community hall which is shared with a range of other users. For health and safety reasons, the outdoor space has not been available to facilitate outdoor play for a prolonged period of time. The playgroup was last inspected in 2007 and there have been no changes in staffing since then.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

¹ The ETI is trialling a new range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage of questionnaires returned may be low.

4. Overall finding

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

Most of the children attending the playgroup are in their second year of pre-school and they are well-settled for the time of year. Almost all of the children engage in purposeful play for sustained periods of time. They have good levels of independence and make choices about the activities they engage in and the materials they use.

At whole-group story time, most of the children listen attentively and respond well to the adults; many children also enjoy opportunities for stories in small groups throughout the play session. The children take a pride in their creative work and the standard of their representational drawing is good. The majority of the children are beginning to play collaboratively and a small number can adopt and sustain a role during imaginative play.

A small number of the children are showing an interest in early writing and all of them label their own work with adult support. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for the children to engage in pre-writing activities across the playroom or to label their work independently.

6. Provision

The staff work hard to provide an attractive learning environment and appropriate use is made of all available space in the playroom. They value and celebrate well the children's work in displays around the room. The daily snack and other necessary routines are well-organised and provide good opportunities for the children to develop their independence, social and conversational skills. The staff now need to ensure that these routines are also used as learning opportunities to develop further the children's thinking and listening skills.

The staff interactions with the children are always satisfactory or better. In the best practice, the staff model role play and intervene appropriately to involve children in collaborative play and they show the children how to plan and build with construction equipment. All of the adults engage regularly and appropriately with the children and, on occasions, use effective questioning to develop the children's thinking and extend their language vocabulary. The staff need to develop further their interactions with the children and exploit more fully the learning within the activities and to extend more effectively the children's mathematical thinking and vocabulary.

Overall, the children's educational programme is well-balanced with satisfactory to good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have identified appropriately in their development planning, the need to develop further the programme for physical development. The current lack of access to the outdoor space limits the opportunity for physical development; however, the staff ensure that there is a short session of movement and rhyme each day. This session should be developed further to provide more interest and challenge for the children.

The staff have been working on the development of their weekly planning and the observations of the children's responses to play. They respond well to the interests of the children in planning the daily activities. There is no long term planning to guide the staff in ensuring appropriate challenge for all of the children, especially those in their second year in the playgroup. The staff need to plan more effectively for progression across the pre-school year, in all areas of the pre-school curriculum, in order to provide a programme which better meets the individual learning needs of all the children.

The staff treat the children with care and respect and there are very good working relationships between the staff and the children. The children are secure and relaxed with the adults and turn to them easily for care and support.

Appropriate attention is given to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of a healthy snack and a daily session of physical activity.

7. Leadership and management

The staff work well as a team in promoting improvement in the playgroup and have successfully re-organised the playroom to make better use of the available space and to create a more inviting learning environment.

The playgroup staff receive good support from the Early Years Organisation's, early years specialist (EYS) within their setting; however, they have attended only a limited number of external training sessions. It is important that the staff avail of targeted staff development opportunities to further their professional development. Self-evaluation is at an early stage of development and there is a need for the staff, with the support of their EYS, to develop their understanding and use of self-evaluation to promote continuous improvements within the provision. The playgroup has a satisfactory development plan in place with some appropriate targets in place for improvement.

The playgroup has established some links with the local primary school to provide a smooth transition for the children which could be further developed to include curricular links. The monthly newsletters provide parents with information on the life and work of the playgroup; however, there is a need for the staff to provide the parents with more detailed information about how they can support their children's learning when at home.

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 broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following areas need to be addressed:

- an intimate care policy should be devised, ratified by the management committee and shared with the parents;
- staff training for child protection needs to be up-dated; and

- the staff should review and strengthen the risk assessment of the use of the local play park for physical play and complete a risk assessment for the supervision and use of the toilet area in the hall.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this pre-school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

Areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the planning to ensure progression across the pre-school year and to meet more fully the needs of all children;
- improve the quality of the staff interactions with the children in order to exploit more fully the learning within the activities and to extend the children's mathematical thinking and vocabulary; and
- develop the staff understanding and use of self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Kilbride Playgroup
Address:	1 Moyra Road BALLYCLARE Co Antrim BT39 0SD
Management Type:	Committee

Date of inspection:	21 October 2013
Date of previous inspection:	May 2007

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	20	-
in their immediate pre-school year	15	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	15	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	15	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
with English as an additional language	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	94%	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
2½ hours	-	189

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