

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gran Tots Playgroup,
Swatragh

Report of an Inspection in
March 2014

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	27	6	22 ¹	5
Staff	5	*	80	*

* fewer than 5

All of the responses and comments in the questionnaires were entirely positive, commenting particularly on the child-centred approach within the playgroup, where the welfare and needs of each child are paramount.

2. Context

Gran Tots Playgroup is situated just off the Main Road in the village of Swatragh, near Maghera town. The playgroup operates a part-time session for 27 children who live in the local and wider rural area.

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	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are welcomed warmly into the playgroup and they all settle quickly to, and engage purposefully in, the wide range of play activities provided for them. They display high levels of concentration and perseverance. During the session, the children play collaboratively and happily, for example, taking turns and sharing resources willingly; they respond confidently to the adults and are keen to talk about their activities.
- The promotion of language is a key feature of the provision and the children's communication skills are developing very well. All of the children listen attentively during story times, show a keen interest in books and engage purposefully in mark making. The staff fosters very well for the children the link between the written and the spoken word through the many annotations on display. Mathematical language is modelled very well by all of the adults, and all opportunities during the play session are used very well by the adults to promote the children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as shape, length, weight, time and number.
- Because the staff carefully plans the programme based on the children's own interests, the children in turn show a high degree of excitement and interest in investigating and experimenting with different materials and in exploring their environment.

6. Provision

- The provision is completely child-centred and promotes effectively learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff has created a rich and stimulating learning environment, both inside and outdoors, and interact very effectively with the children to promote enjoyment in their learning. The use by the adults of open-ended questions extends and challenges the children's thinking and responses.
- The planning process is systematic and thorough, focused on the children's ideas and interests, and involves all of the staff in planning for specific areas of the curriculum on a rotational basis; this involvement of all of the adults in the planning process is promoting excellent staff development and an in-depth knowledge by all of the pre-school curriculum. The detailed observations of the children's learning are linked closely to the planning, and guide the next steps in the children's learning.

- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. Most of the adults have been working together for a long time and have very positive working relationships. An inclusive and supportive ethos permeates the playgroup, and the welfare, the needs and the interests of the children are at the centre of all that goes on.
- The attention to healthy eating and physical activity is outstanding, evident through the healthy snack options and the many creative opportunities provided for the children for energetic play.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader of the playgroup has been in post for ten years; she provides outstanding leadership and is a very effective role model. She is supported very ably by the other staff, in promoting a reflective culture and a collaborative and collegial approach to the leadership and management of the playgroup.
- The playgroup has productive links with the parents, other agencies and pre-school clusters and the local primary school to which the children transfer.
- The early years specialist has provided very good support and advice. The playgroup also benefits from the well-informed management committee that supports the continuous development of the playgroup.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant department.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The playgroup has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Gran Tots
Address:	15d Main Street Swatragh MAGHERA Co Londonderry BT46 5QB
Management Type:	Other

Date of inspection:	5 March 2014
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	27	-
in their immediate pre-school year	27	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	25	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	25	-
with a statement of special educational needs	*	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	-
with English as an additional language	N/A	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	N/A	-
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	92.02%	-

* 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	N/A	5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	N/A	5
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	N/A	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	N/A	1

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	N/A	188

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