

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Hundred Acre Wood Playgroup,
Comber, Co Down

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 ¹	*	*	9%	*
Staff	*	*	17%	*

* fewer than 5

All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the work of the playgroup.

2. Context

Hundred Acre Wood Playgroup is located on the Ballystockart Road, Comber, County Down. The playgroup offers two part-time sessions with 26 children in each. The children attending the playgroup come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a second part-time afternoon session has been established.

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	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- Nearly all of the children are well settled. They know the playroom routines, can choose resources independently and make good use of all the space available. Almost all of the children engage in purposeful and productive play throughout the sessions. They demonstrate good self-management skills as they self-label their work, organise their own snack and dress appropriately for outdoor play.
- During the inspection, the majority of the children engaged in purposeful play, they co-operated well with one another and with the adults. The children are developing firm friendships and are growing in confidence, this is evident when they join in, and listen attentively during the 'show and tell' sessions.
- Most of the children enjoy listening to stories; they often model language and learning as a result of positive interaction with the staff and are making good progress in their learning. The majority of the children are confident to ask and respond to questions. Many of children are beginning to engage in early mark-making and most can identify their own name in print; a few are beginning to identify and write the letters in their own names. Rhymes and songs are used well to introduce the children to number and other early mathematical ideas and the children clearly enjoy taking part in the singing sessions.

6. Provision

- There is a warm welcoming ethos within the playgroup; the staff have worked hard to create a bright, clean and stimulating learning environment for the children both indoors and outside. The attractively presented and well organised playroom provides very good opportunities for learning in almost all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. During the inspection, there were very good examples of the staff interacting skilfully with the children to extend their language and thinking skills, and to promote the development of early mathematics concepts. As the staff continue to develop the programme they need to develop further the learning for the world around us and outdoor physical play.
- The two leaders plan together regularly and then share the planning with the other staff; while they have made very good progress in developing an effective system for recording their ideas, it will be important for all of the staff to plan together to identify and understand more fully the learning inherent in the activities. A good start has been made to observing the children at play and recording their responses. The staff evaluate the children's responses to the planned activities and these in turn have begun to inform the future planning

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. The staff is very caring and committed to the needs of the children; good links have been established with the parents and outside agencies.

7. Leadership and management

- The proprietor sets high standards for the staff and is a good role model; she has purchased a wide range of additional resources to support the play programme in order to enhance the children's play and learning. Much attention has been given to the continuous professional development of the staff; there is evidence that their attendance at a wide range of courses is having a positive impact on the learning opportunities for the children. The staff has begun to develop self-evaluation and has identified areas for further development. The centre's early years specialist provides good external support for the staff. While the staff regularly evaluate the advice provided by the early years specialist, they need to implement more fully the good practice actions highlighted.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example the children have access to a healthy snack and regular opportunities for physical play.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Hundred Acre Wood Playgroup
Address:	38 Ballystockart Road COMBER Co Down BT23 5QY
Management Type:	Private

Date of inspection:	10 March 2014
Date of previous inspection:	16 November 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	26	26
in their immediate pre-school year	26	7
funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	7
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	26	7
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	*	*
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	*	*
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	90%	87%

* 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		7
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		5
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within previous 12 months		2

Number of: ***	
Students	*
Trainees	*

*** 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	2½ hours	188

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