

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rascals 'N' Ruffians Playgroup,
Newry

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	25	9	36 ¹	*
Staff	*	*	100	*

* fewer than 5

All of the parent and staff responses to the questionnaires were positive. The parents are very pleased with the progress their children are making and commented on the approachable and friendly nature of the staff. All of the staff members are long-serving, and they all commented on their enjoyment of, and fulfilment in, their work and the excellent working relationships within the staff team.

2. Context

Rascals 'N' Ruffians Playgroup is situated in purpose-built accommodation in Ballyholland, just outside the city of Newry. All of the children who attend the playgroup come from the local area. The staff has been working together in the playgroup for the past fifteen years.

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

- All of the children happily leave their parents and guardians at the start of the session and enter the playroom with eagerness, enthusiasm and with smiles on their faces. They settle quickly to their activities, are highly motivated, co-operate very well with one another and enjoy each others' company. The children sustain high levels of concentration and perseverance in their play and take a pride in their achievements.
- The children are making very good progress in the development of their communication and language skills. They express themselves with confidence and are keen to converse about their experiences with the staff and with each other. The many books available in the playroom are used as a natural part of the play, with many of the children showing a strong interest in them. The children enjoy experimenting with a wide range of writing materials, and their representational drawings show excellent progression. All of the children listen attentively and participate willingly during the song and story times.
- The children have many opportunities to develop a very good understanding of early mathematical concepts. They show a high level of curiosity and interest in the natural world and explore with excitement the many natural materials incorporated into their play.

6. Provision

- The staff provide an inclusive, welcoming, caring and stimulating environment and demonstrate sensitivity and kindness in their work with the children. They have a very good understanding of all the aspects of the pre-school curriculum, and ensure that the wide range of activities provided extends and challenges the children in their learning.
- The staff listen to the children and value and builds on their ideas. The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is outstanding, and their comments and open-ended questions extend and enhance the children's language, reasoning and creativity.
- The planned programme in the playgroup is both broad and balanced, with excellent opportunities for learning across all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The detailed observations made by the staff of the children during their play are used effectively to track progress and guide future planning.

- The playgroup gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the provision of healthy snacks and the regular opportunities for physical activity outdoors.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader is highly motivated and provides very effective leadership; she promotes a culture of consultation and reflection. She is very ably supported by the other three members of this long-serving and hard working team. A key feature of the leadership is the very strong collegial approach of the staff team to improvement and the excellent positive working relationships they enjoy. The staff have received excellent and well-focused guidance from the early years specialist.
- The playgroup has developed very effective links with the parents, seeking their views and keeping them well-informed about their children's progress. There is also a close link with the nearby primary school, ensuring a smooth transition for the children to the next stage of their education.
- 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 Departments.

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:	Rascals'N' Ruffians Playgroup
Address:	10 Betty's Hill Road Ballyholland NEWRY BT34 2LY
Management Type:	Voluntary Committee
Date of inspection:	26 March 2014
Date of previous inspection:	6 November 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	25	
in their immediate pre-school year	25	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	25	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	5	
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	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	90%	

* 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	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
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
3 hours	-	190

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