

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Springfield Primary School  
Playgroup, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2014

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## 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	16	*	25% <sup>1</sup>	*
Staff	*	*	*	*

\* fewer than 5

The parents who responded were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In particular, they commented on the pleasant and approachable staff and the wide range of learning experiences provided for the children.

## 2. Context

The playgroup is accommodated in a classroom within Springfield Road Primary School. The playgroup was last inspected in 2006 and there has been one staffing change in the intervening period. At the time of the inspection, there were sixteen children in their pre-school year funded by the Department of Education.

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the response rate may be low

#### 4. Overall finding

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>

#### Key findings of the inspection

##### 5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children are well-settled and engage in purposeful and sustained play. They demonstrate high levels of independence, accessing resources to personalise their creative work. The children's behaviour is very good; they take turns and co-operate well with their peers.
- The children's language is well developed. They use appropriate vocabulary to express their thoughts and ideas. They listen attentively to stories and actively participate in action rhymes and songs. There is evidence of the children developing appropriate attention to detail in their representational paintings and junk models.
- The children show an interest in early mathematics and are able to participate well in activities involving counting, sorting, and measuring. In the construction area, they use appropriate positional language to express their ideas. A small number of children were observed naming and identifying a range of 2-D shapes.

##### 6. Provision

- The well organised and resourced playroom provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The children's work is highly valued by the staff and is displayed imaginatively in the playroom and in the shared areas. Routines are well established and snack time is used effectively to develop the children's independence, social and conversational skills.
- Each staff member is caring, supportive and skilful in listening carefully to the children and extending the children's thinking skills, learning and vocabulary. The quality of the staff interactions with the children were always good and, in the majority of instances, were very good or outstanding.
- The children's educational programme is well-balanced providing good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The planning and assessment methods are highly effective. Observations of the children are perceptive and are used well to inform future planning in meeting the needs of all the children.
- The quality of the pastoral care is very good. There is an inclusive and welcoming ethos; the children respond well to the high expectations set by the staff.

- The play group gives very good attention to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, for example, the provision of a healthy snack and lunch, and engagement in a range of well-planned physical activities both indoors and outdoors.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leader is highly motivated and is ably supported by the playgroup assistant. A culture of self-evaluation and reflection is well embedded and the development planning process has led to significant improvement in the learning experiences of the children. There has been a high turnover of early years support; the staff work well with the current early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation and value her contribution to improving the provision for the children.
- The playgroup maintains effective links with the parents and works closely with the local primary school and relevant external agencies.
- 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 relevant Departments but the following area needs to be addressed; the designated member of the management committee needs to receive relevant training as soon as possible.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of 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

<b>Name of pre-school setting:</b>	Springfield Primary School Playgroup
<b>Address:</b>	425 Springfield Road BELFAST BT12 7DJ
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	8 May 2014
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	6 November 2006

1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	16	-
in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	16	-
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	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	97%	-

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	2	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

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

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
3 hours	-	187



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