

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



St MacNissi's Pre-school Playgroup, Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (3BB-0246)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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1. Context

St Macnissi's Pre-school Playgroup is located in purpose built accommodation within the grounds of St MacNissi's Primary School; there are well-resourced grass and tarmac outdoor play areas. The children attending the pre-school come from the local area. A new leader, appointed in March 2017, is a qualified teacher who also works within the primary school.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared strike action/Action Short of Strike (ASoS) in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the ETI. Prior to the inspection, the pre-school informed the ETI that none of the teachers, would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#

Average attendance for the previous year.	95.8
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were extremely positive about the life and work of the pre-school, there were no written comments. A summary of the responses from the parental questionnaire were shared with the chair of the management committee.

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the online questionnaire information to staff. Therefore it is not possible to report on the views of the staff.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision; and
- quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Provision for learning	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

5. Outcomes for learners

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the learning outcomes for the children;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The planning provides a varied programme across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. There is a system in place for observing, assessing and monitoring each child's progress. The staff use the information gained through observations and assessment of the children to inform future planning.
- The children who have additional learning needs are identified early; the individual learning plans contain strategies and targets that are monitored and evaluated. The staff are further developing their own expertise and training through attending clusters and courses.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

7. Leadership and management

- The inspectors met with a representative of the management committee who reported that they are well informed through regular meetings with the staff; contribute to the development plan; and use their challenge function appropriately.
- There are very positive links with the primary school, parents, the local community and external agencies. The parents' views are sought and valued; they receive regular information through a monthly newsletter and the website; attend events, for example, international food day and world book day; and they organise fundraising events. A wide range of visitors to the setting are enriching the children's learning experiences.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and management;
- the effectiveness and impact of the leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. However, owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the pre-school. St MacNissi's Pre-school Playgroup needs to update the safeguarding policy and flowcharts.

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. The pre-school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impacts positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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