

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Aghadowey Pre-School
Playgroup, Coleraine,
County Londonderry

Report of an inspection in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



Quantitative 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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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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 settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed learning and teaching 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 meeting with those involved with leadership and management including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

A small number of the parents and the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. Overall, the responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision. The responses were shared with the staff and management group.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Aghadowey Pre-School Playgroup is located in a purpose-built mobile in the grounds of the Cullycapple Welfare Support Centre. All of the staff were in post at the time of the previous inspection in January 2007.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are engaged in concentrated learning and confident to explore a wide range of materials. Their behaviour is exemplary and they share and collaborate effectively in all areas of learning. The younger children in their penultimate pre-school year are integrated very well with the pre-school children. They turn readily to the staff for support while the pre-school children display high levels of independence and have a well-developed sense of responsibility for the care of the learning environment. All the children are aware of the well-organised, smooth and flexible routines of the day.
- Most of the children are developing appropriate speech and language skills and levels of concentration. They play imaginatively and creatively in role play situations, use a wide range of suitable vocabulary about the work of the optician, the emergency services, and can name herbs and vegetables. The children listen to one another and to stories told by the staff and are confident to offer their own ideas, ask questions and request additional resources to enhance their play. Mark-making and representational artwork is well developed and the children are aware of the link between the spoken word and the written text. They are competent in climbing and balancing activities in the outdoors during safe, adventurous, physical and imaginative play in the two big old trees.
- The children explore and experiment with high levels of curiosity. The use of the sensory herb garden, plants and flowers engages the children in caring for plants and in developing their understanding of the differences between leaves. They are developing effectively the use of scientific and mathematical language to describe their observations. Mathematical concepts about number and, shape and space are applied with understanding as a natural part of the play routines and activities.

6. Provision for learning

- The high quality of the provision and the creative use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments for the children are key strengths of the playgroup. The staff plan and assess effectively the children's progress and development and address the specific needs and interests of the individual children.
- The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional (PSE) development, language skills, and their awareness of the World Around Us extend effectively the children's opportunities for learning. A broad and balanced pre-school programme for the children includes all areas of the pre-school curriculum and encourages high levels of curiosity and sensory play.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is highly skilful and engages the children to explore, experiment and investigate the natural materials. The staff sustain consistently the children's involvement in learning by being responsive to their needs; they record observations and actions to improve learning and development.

- The staff identify and intervene early to support the children with additional needs. They have identified a small number of children with additional language needs and have a range of highly effective strategies to develop attention, listening and understanding through one-to-one discussions, enjoyable story sessions, singing and repeating musical rhythms. The provision of a home-playgroup communication book is an effective strategy used by the staff to share important information with parents.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. There is a calm and caring ethos which impacts on the life and work of the playgroup. The staff know the children well; they respond with prompt and purposeful attention to their needs and interests. The settling-in period for the children is valued and effective; the parents are encouraged to stay and play alongside until the children feel safe and secure with the staff.
- The playgroup gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity; the children enjoy healthy snacks and participate in a varied range of energetic physical activities. The staff are careful to monitor the effects of the warm weather and ensure that cold drinks and fruit snack are available in the outdoors.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup leader and staff sustain a high quality of provision that meets consistently the needs of the children. The parents are consulted, through a questionnaire, about the provision and have very good opportunities to discuss their children's progress and development. The staff have well-developed links with community agencies and engage in many events to fund-raise for the playgroup and to act as a central venue for the playgroup community to meet as a group.
- The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation provides very good levels of support to the staff. The development of self-evaluation and a reflective approach to their work has facilitated ongoing improvement in the quality of the playgroup's provision. The staff are planning currently to develop access to a nearby ,obsolete, physical play area in the grounds of the former Cullycapple Primary School in order to extend further the children's space for physical play.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Aghadowey Pre-School Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON AGHADOWEY PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, COLERAINE.

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	9
Attending part-time	14
Under 3 years of age*	1
Funded by Department of Education	9
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	0
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

* On 1 July.

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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	88%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	3 hours	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within the previous 12 months		0

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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