

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Appletree Childcare, Garvagh, County Londonderry

Private Daycare DE Ref No (3CB-0567)

Report of an Inspection in February 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

Appletree Childcare is situated in a refurbished building on the outskirts of Garvagh. The pre-school room is part of the Appletree Childcare Centre and the children attending the centre come from the surrounding area. At the time of inspection, a new leader and a new centre manager had recently taken up post.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	11
Funded by Department of Education	11
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	98
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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 significant minority of the parents and half of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were highly positive about the life and work of the centre. In written comments the parents highlighted how happy, safe and stimulated their children are, and how well they are growing in confidence and in independence and also their satisfaction with the very committed, nurturing staff who are respectful of their children as individuals. Parents also acknowledged the meaningful and positive links the centre has with families and the local community. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from the management committee.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children interact very positively with staff and each other and are keen to participate promptly in play activities. They engage enthusiastically in sustained periods of creative and purposeful play in which they work well individually, in pairs and in larger groups.
- The children access and choose independently from a wide range of natural and authentic resources, and use them well to develop their ideas. Almost all are actively involved in the tidy-up routine and can sort, put away resources and help to clean play areas.
- The children are developing well their understanding of number, measures, estimation and prediction in very meaningful contexts throughout the day, for example, allocating enough hot-cross buns to include staff, and gauging how low the class blinds should be to avoid excessive sunlight.
- Almost all of the children communicate confidently their interests, ideas and needs throughout the day and listen well to staff and to each other. They show keen interest in looking at and handling books and they all listened attentively at group story time. The children showed good interest in early mark making and they modelled purposeful writing very well during role play.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are making good progress and enjoy partaking fully in all play activities.

6. Quality of Provision

- The staff create a positive and stimulating learning environment and make good use of the available space in the playroom, including the recently re-designed entrance hall and library.
- The broad and balanced curriculum presents good and very good opportunities for learning across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The provision for outdoor play is currently limited due to re-construction works, and as a result the current activities and resources available to the children are limited. A particular strength of the curriculum is the inherent child-led approach which provides for lengthy periods of productive play, and promotes well the children's thinking and decision-making skills.
- The planning provides a good range of progressive learning opportunities including access to a Forest School programme which develops very well the children's appreciation and knowledge of the World Around Us. The observations and assessment of the children's learning do not inform effectively enough the short-term planning and the staff have prioritised appropriately the need to improve this.
- The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently good quality and in some instances are very good. In the best practice, the questioning extends the children's understanding and develops their ability to think and express themselves creatively.

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified appropriately and their individual needs are met sensitively within an inclusive, caring environment. The targets on the individual educational plans need to be more clearly defined to facilitate more achievable and measurable progress for the children.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The nurturing, child-centred approach and highly positive working relationships progresses well the children's personal, social and emotional development.

7. Leadership and management

- The newly-established staff team approach all aspects of improvement of the centre's provision in a very positive, collegial way. They demonstrate a commitment to and a vision for providing quality care and learning opportunities for the children. The staff are not provided with sufficient dedicated planning and administration time.
- The centre development plan outlines appropriate priorities for improvement based on professional judgement and consultation with parents and families. The targets outlined in the associated action plans do not focus sufficiently on the intended impact on the children's learning.
- The newly formed management committee for the playgroup, having recently revised all roles and responsibilities in collaboration with day-care centre's management, demonstrate a strong commitment to playing a pro-active role in developing all aspects of provision within the centre. The effective support of the independent early years specialist is much valued and there is a collegial acknowledgement of the centres strengths and areas for improvement.
- The centre is actively involved in the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn project, and parents increasingly play an active part in the education of their children. There is a well-established partnership with the Forest School Association in conjunction with two nearby early years settings, and the children thoroughly enjoy the joint outdoor sessions. Purposeful links are maintained with local primary schools to promote smooth transitions for the children and their families.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments

9. Overall effectiveness

Appletree Childcare demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the processes for observing and assessing the children's learning and use this information more systematically to inform planning; and
- to develop further the action planning process and ensure that the targets identified will lead to an impact on the outcomes for the children.

The ETI will monitor how the nursery/playgroup sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements, progression and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with 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 a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management¹:

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 impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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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