

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ardglass Pre-School, Ardglass,
County Down

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
April 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	4

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Ardglass Pre-school is located within the grounds of St Nicholas' Primary School on the outskirts of Ardglass, County Down. There has been a significant change in staffing since the last inspection in January 2012. A new leader was appointed in September 2015, a new deputy leader was appointed in January 2018, and a new assistant was appointed in April 2018. Two temporary assistants were employed by the playgroup at the time of the inspection. The leader of the playgroup operates a Sure Start programme every afternoon.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	25
Funded by Department of Education	25
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

** 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 minority of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In written comments the parents commended: the professional leader and the friendly and approachable staff; the high levels of support for children with additional needs; and, the excellent communication between staff and parents. In written comments the staff highlighted their commitment to providing a high standard of learning and teaching for the children through effective teamwork.

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	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children settle quickly to play and are developing well their independence. They self-register, manage their own snack, and access resources to enhance their play. A minority of children find it difficult to share and turn-take; they require adult support and intervention to sustain their play.
- Most of the children enjoy browsing in books from the attractive library area and have well-developed book handling skills. The children listen attentively during story-time and most have a good recall of the story. During rhyme time, the children participate enthusiastically and have a good repertoire of rhymes and songs. Most of the children are developing well their oral language and are confident in interacting with adults. During the inspection, a small number of children were observed in purposeful mark-making.
- The children's mathematical knowledge and understanding is very well-developed for most of the children. They recognise numerals, count, weigh, measure and explore shape as a natural part of their play.
- Most of the children are curious about the world around them and use their senses to investigate the natural environment, such as, the seaweed in the water tray and the insects in the bug hotel. The children use a range of materials to create independent artwork which is of a good quality.
- The children with additional needs are making good progress in line with expectations within their individual education plans (IEPs).

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a varied programme with good to very good opportunities for the children to develop their learning across all areas of pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's mathematical skills is a particular strength of the provision. However, the children's creativity and ability to sustain concentrated play, without the support of an adult, needs to be developed further.
- The staff know the children very well as is evidenced by the regular and meaningful observations of the children which are used to inform the short-term planning. While outdoor planning is in place, it is underdeveloped; this has been identified appropriately by the staff and the independent early years' specialist (EYS) as an area for improvement. The staff use a good range of authentic and natural resources, which are well-organised and readily accessible to the children, to enhance the indoor and outdoor play experiences.

- The staff interactions with the children are consistently of a very good quality. The staff respond promptly to the children's ideas and interests, use open-ended questions and model language very effectively to develop and extend the children's learning.
- Through the excellent links with the local Sure Start provision, the children who have additional learning needs are identified early and appropriately. The staff use a wide range of strategies to enable the children to access the curriculum. The staff have identified appropriately the need to improve the quality of the individual education plans and are trialling various formats. The current targets within the children's IEPs are too generic.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. A warm and nurturing ethos pervades the playgroup and relationships are excellent at all levels. Consequently, the children are happy and well-settled.

7. Leadership and management

- The recently established leadership team is collegial and has a clear vision for the future development of the playgroup which is captured in the well-constructed development plan. The management committee have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and support the staff very well with their improvement work. The staff have benefited significantly from the newly appointed independent EYS who provides clear guidance and support.
- Through self-evaluation, the staff have identified appropriate areas for development. Recent improvement work on developing the mathematical provision and introducing the Big Bedtime Read has impacted positively on the children's mathematical knowledge and their interest in books. It will be important that the staff continue to work with the independent EYS to demonstrate clearly the improvements in the areas identified within the development plan.
- A significant strength of the provision is the professional discussion and strategic planning between the pre-school, the local Sure Start and a wide range of external agencies which has resulted in timely support for children with additional needs. There are very effective links with the local primary school in supporting the children with transition.

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, Ardglass Pre-school needs to update:

- the positive behaviour policy to reflect the practice within the setting;
- the staff code of conduct; and
- the intimate care policy to include record keeping.

9. Overall effectiveness

Ardglass Pre-school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There is an area for improvement that the pre-school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is:

- to develop further the learning potential within the planning , in particular, for outdoor play and creativity to ensure progression for all children.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.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; 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 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 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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