

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ardstraw Community Playgroup,
Omagh, County Tyrone

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 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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1. Context

Ardstraw Community Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation within the grounds of a local primary school. The children attending the playgroup come from the local surrounding area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	19
Funded by Department of Education	11
With statement of special educational needs	0
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**	#
With English as an additional language	0
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	94
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

2. Views of parents and staff

Forty-five percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses from both the parents and the staff were wholly positive. The parents highlighted the friendly, caring and professional staff and appreciate the regular information they receive on their children's progress and well-being. The staff acknowledged their involvement in the development planning process and opportunities for professional learning.

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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children settle quickly and enthusiastically to purposeful, sustained and imaginative play. The children's independence is very well developed and they have high levels of confidence; leading them to extend and direct their own play, ably supported by the staff. The children's level of maturity is evidenced by the way in which they negotiate with each other in a sensitive manner to share resources.
- The children are articulate and able to express themselves confidently in discussion with the staff and visitors; their natural curiosity in the world around them is fully exploited through regular opportunities to ask questions of their peers and the adults. The children use early mark-making in relevant contexts throughout the planned activities and show a high level of interest in the books which are provided throughout the playroom.
- The children show understanding, at an appropriate developmental level, in the days of the week, number, colour, shape, length, time, capacity, sorting and matching and comparison. The children apply their skills and knowledge in early mathematics across the planned activities both indoors and outdoors.
- The children care for a variety of living plants indoors and outdoors, engage in bug and bird watching and show a high level of respect and care for the available resources.
- The children's representational drawings are very detailed and they produce imaginative junk art; accessing independently a range of creative resources to personalise their work. The children initiate spontaneous singing sessions and are developing a sense of rhythm using the musical instruments which are provided during indoor and outdoor play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff make creative use of the available space in the playroom and outdoors to provide an environment which is characterised by enjoyment, investigation and discovery. The use of a wide range of natural materials provides real life contexts for the children's play. The timetable is well organised and daily routines are well established and used to develop the children's independence. The arrangements for snack provide very good opportunities to develop the children's conversational and social skills. The provision for outdoor play provides an extension to the wide range of indoor learning opportunities.
- The quality of the staff interaction is consistently outstanding; they know the children well and intuitively respond to their needs and interests. The development of the children's communication skills is a high priority for the staff and, while it is evident across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, there is a particular emphasis on extending the children's vocabulary in mathematics, the natural world and early science. Open-ended questioning is used very effectively by the staff to stimulate meaningful discussion, create opportunities for further exploration and sensitively encourage the children to explain their thinking. All the opportunities for learning across the play session are used effectively.

- The planning, observation and assessment is of a very high quality and there is clear evidence of progression for all the children, including those requiring additional support with their learning. Of particular note is the skill of the staff in evaluating the learning observed, the emphasis placed on spontaneous play and the inclusion of the children's ideas and opinions, all of which are used to inform future planning and provide support and challenge.
- The children requiring support with their learning are identified early and benefit from well-planned individualised daily programme of support.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on all aspects of the children's learning and well-being. The promotion of inclusion and diversity is a priority and is well established in the playgroup; the children are aware of other cultures and are developing an appropriate understanding and empathy with the feelings of their peers. The child-centred ethos and the positive working relationships provide a nurturing learning environment for all of the children

7. Leadership and management

- The team of staff are experienced and work well collegially; they have a shared vision of providing outstanding pre-school provision within the community. The well-established culture of self-evaluation and self-reflection informs the rigorous and well-embedded process of development planning. The staff are ably supported by the management committee who are fully involved in the improvement process and are committed, through training and their own self-evaluation process, to increasing their leadership capacity within the playgroup.
- The playgroup has excellent links with the parents and the local primary schools, community and churches. The staff and children have recently joined the 'Sharing from the Start' initiative, have established links with the local Surestart programme and are involved in the local village renewal scheme.
- The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation provides a high quality of support to the playgroup; bringing innovative ideas which stimulate discussion and actions for the staff to improve further the provision and outcomes for the children

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

Ardstraw Community Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the 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, 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 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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