

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Armoy Community Playgroup,
Ballymoney, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
June 2017



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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Armoy Cross-Community Playgroup is accommodated within a Community Centre in the centre of the village. The deputy leader is recently appointed. The hall and outdoor area attached to the centre are shared by other community groups. The children attending the playgroup come from the local area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Under 3 years of age*	0
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	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#
With English as an additional language	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	87.5%
Number of days open in previous school year	174

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

A small number of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the playgroup. In particular they indicated how happy their children are, and how well they are progressing. The ETI has reported to the staff and representatives from the management group the main findings and comments emerging from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very independent and play collaboratively with each other for sustained periods of time. Their self-management skills are well established; they engage confidently with staff and peers, and move easily between the playroom and the adjacent hall which is used for physical play.
- The children achieve well across the six areas of the preschool curriculum. Almost all of the children have very good speech and oral language for their age and stage of development and can listen attentively and follow complex instructions when involved in group and physical activities. They are interested in books, look at them independently and respond to the group story session with understanding and enthusiasm.
- The children understand simple mathematical concepts well and sort, measure, count and use positional language appropriately during their play. They enjoy solving problems and taking risks during play activities, and are encouraged to extend and test their ideas.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff create successfully an attractive, child-centred learning environment which supports well independent access to materials by the children. The routines and transitions of the day are well embedded and offer the children opportunities to assume roles and responsibilities, for example preparing for and tidying up after activities. The well-planned use of the shared hall complements the limited outdoor space, ensuring regular access to physical play and group activities.
- The staff engage positively and easily with the children. They acknowledge and extend the children's ideas and interests through very effective questioning and encouragement.
- The staff plan an appropriate, well-balanced educational programme covering all areas of the curriculum. Their observations focus effectively on children's learning but are not linked well enough to the planning.
- The needs of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified and their progress is monitored through current observations. However, the process is not leading to sufficiently rigorous monitoring of agreed targets, strategies, interventions and progress.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a nurturing, inclusive ethos in the playgroup where all children and staff are valued.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack and there are appropriate periods throughout the week for energetic physical play. These routines promote well the children's independence, social skills and language development.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff team are working collaboratively and with commitment to develop evaluation and improvement in the playgroup's provision and are being supported very effectively by the early years specialist.
- The development plan outlines appropriate prioritised areas for improvement. The associated action plans however do not focus specifically enough on the impact of the actions on the intended improvement on the children's learning.
- The playgroup has effective links with parents, who are invited to music and drama performances in the evenings throughout the year. The staff maintain strong positive links with the local community and work closely with the main primary schools to which the children transfer.
- The management group is very supportive of the staff and the work of the playgroup.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The child protection training for members of the management committee needs to be completed.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Armoy Cross Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The playgroup needs to review how their focused observations and evaluations can be linked more closely to planning, to ensure progression in the children's learning.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

APPENDIX A

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

Part-time: am
9.00-11.45am

Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

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>

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 board of governors; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

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 outcomes, on provision 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 the 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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