

# Education and Training Inspectorate

## PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Ballinascreen Early Years Centre, Draperstown,  
County Londonderry

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (3AB-0101)

Report of an Inspection in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Ballinascreen Early Years Centre provides funded pre-school places for one morning and one afternoon session. The pre-school is located in Draperstown Business Park, in a dedicated building with access to two small, adjoining outdoor areas. The pre-school centre operates as a limited company with a Board of Directors. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant period of temporary leadership. Permanent leadership has been in place since January 2019. At the time of the inspection, two additional staff were providing individual support for children identified with additional needs.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	26	25
Funded by Department of Education	26	16
With a statement of special educational needs		#
Without a statement but receiving therapy of support from other professional professionals for special educational needs	#	
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4	0	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	72.3%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

**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 the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were all very positive about the care and provision being provided by the staff for the children. A small number of the staff responses were less positive about communication and roles and responsibilities within the leadership and management. A summary of the questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from the management group.

### 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	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Good

### KEY FINDINGS

#### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are making good to very good progress across most aspects of their learning.
- The children's social skills are developing very well; they take turns during games, collaborate during their role-play and are developing firm friendships. The children independently self-register on arrival and manage their own personal care and the informal snack routine with confidence. Most of the children spend sustained periods exploring activities and maintain good attention and concentration. The small number of children, who still require some adult support with their learning, are developing well their self-regulation, confidence and independence.
- The children listen attentively and respond well to larger group sessions with a focus on songs and stories and to incidental opportunities to sing and refer to books during the session. Most of the children talk freely and confidently to the staff and one another about their own experiences or about the development of their own play. They initiate role play as, family members, customers and shopkeepers in the shop and home role play areas.
- Most of the children understand, and at times use mathematical language associated with number, shape, colour and comparison of size as a natural part of their play and daily routines. They do not explore concepts of time and pattern to the same extent.
- The children focus intently when exploring the natural materials including sand, water, dough and real vegetables. A small number of children experiment and problem solve during their play to find solutions, such as, catching the water dripping out of the tray or trying to attach a trailer to their ride-on toy.
- The children's fine motor skills are developing well; they use tools such as knives to butter their bread, scissors and brushes with increased confidence. While the children enjoy pedalling ride on toys and some throw and catch balls and bean bags, overall, their energetic play and gross motor skills are not as well developed.
- The children with additional needs are well integrated and are making progress in their learning and development.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The planning does not currently guide the staff sufficiently in their day-to-day interactions with the children, or track progression in the learning and use of resources. The staff team have begun to use a collaborative team approach to their planning and recognise the need for a more appropriate child-led implementation of the curriculum. While they make useful observations and assessments of the children's learning and have recently updated and improved their approaches to collating and using their information to inform their planning process, these approaches are not yet sufficiently developed or embedded.
- The staff are trialling different approaches to the use of the outdoor spaces; the organisation and use of resources in these spaces requires further evaluation and review to provide sufficient space for energetic play. The playroom is set out into distinct areas of play and has recently been enhanced with additional resources and areas of play. There are good opportunities for learning across most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The staff provide a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. A majority of the staff interactions with the children are of a high quality to support productive play, model language, support their social skills and manage very well the whole group activities. At times the staff miss opportunities to observe, wait and listen to the children, give them time to respond, build sufficiently on their ideas and use open-ended questions to promote the children's thinking skills.
- The staff identify early the children with additional learning needs and liaise with parents and other health professionals. The children are supported well during the session and their individual play plans are reviewed regularly. The staff have identified appropriately the need to continue to build their capacity and seek relevant guidance and advice to plan suitable strategies and approaches to meet the increasing number of children entering with complex needs.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The staff's caring and supportive approach is developing well the children's behaviour and their social skills and friendships.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management is emerging from a period of change and uncertainty. There is a clear vision and sense of direction among the staff team, who are very well supported in implementing that vision by the Independent Early Years Specialist (IEYS). The development plan identifies relevant priority areas for further development which are in line with the inspection findings.
- The staff are reflective in their practice and focus their evaluations well on the impact that the changes made have had on the children's learning. They have made positive improvements within a short period, including changes to the snack routine, more child-led creative activities, increased space for construction and providing more natural materials; all of which have enhanced the children's learning opportunities. The communication between the management group, leadership, IEYS and staff is not effective enough to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and that staff have sufficient time together to carry out their work collaboratively.

- Parents are provided with information about their children's progress and their views are sought and valued. There are good links with the local primary schools to which the children transfer fostering a smooth transition processes.

## **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**

Ballinascreen Early Years Centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners. There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop further the children's own creative ideas, thinking skills and their gross motor skills;
- develop the planning to promote more consistently high quality staff interactions that build on the children's own ideas and interests; and
- improve the communication between the leadership and management to support and embed the improvements that have been made.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

**Health and Safety**

1. The outdoor slides are too small for the children.
2. The children need to wear sunhats on hot sunny days in line with the pre-school policy.

### 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<sup>1</sup>:

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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