

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyronan Community
Playgroup, Magherafelt,
County Derry

Report of an Inspection in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Quantitative 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 Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning 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 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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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

All of the staff completed the confidential, online questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. A majority of the responses from the small number of parents who completed the confidential online questionnaire were positive. All of the findings from the questionnaires were shared with representatives from the management group.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Ballyronan Community Playgroup is situated in a dedicated playgroup room in the Mid-Ulster District Council's building at Ballyronan Marina. Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the staff team and in their roles and responsibilities. The leader was a deputy leader at the time of the previous inspection and has since been joined by the other two current members of staff.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and secure in the routines in the playgroup. Their behaviour is excellent; they interact confidently and respectfully with the staff and visitors and play with their peers in a collaborative manner. The children make independent choices about which resources they will include in their play and demonstrate high levels of self-help skills. They self-register and put on, take off and hang up their coats and aprons independently.
- Most of the children are developing appropriate language and communication skills and all of the children joined in with songs and rhymes. They displayed very good attention during the group story session, responding to the characters in the story with enthusiasm. There is provision for mark making; however, the staff need to develop further this area to engage all of the children.
- The children demonstrate a particular interest in early mathematical concepts and use early mathematical language appropriately in a range of activities. They count, measure in a variety of forms and investigate shape and time as part of their play.
- The children experiment with paint and colour to produce imaginative and child-initiated works of art. They engage collaboratively in role play in the kitchen and the home corner and use magnifying glasses to explore the flowers they have planted. The children work together to explore ideas and solve problems to build models using the range of construction material provided.

6. Provision for learning

- The stimulating indoor learning environment celebrates the children's work through the extensive display of annotated photographs and art work. An array of authentic resources enriches the children's learning experiences and encourages imaginative play.
- The staff take account of the children's interests and needs in their planning and have started to incorporate child-led ideas and questions. They are developing well their system of observation, monitoring and assessment of the children's learning. The staff need to develop further the planning and provision for outdoor play in order to provide a broader range of outdoor learning experiences.
- The staff interact skilfully with the children to develop and extend their learning. They pose simple problems for the children to solve and ask questions that motivate the children to use their senses to find answers and investigate further their ideas. The children with special educational needs are supported sensitively and included effectively in all activities. Their progress is monitored regularly through the review of the effective targets on the individual education plans.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There is a welcoming, respectful ethos and supportive working relationships are evident at all levels. The staff respond to the children with care and show an interest in their lives.

- The staff give good attention to promoting a healthy lifestyle through the provision of healthy snacks and opportunities to engage in physical activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup leader, supported well by the staff, has a strategic vision for the further development of the provision to meet the needs of all of the children. The playgroup leaders are both improving their early years qualifications. Effective action plans focused on appropriate priorities are in place to guide and monitor the progress of the development plan. The playgroup's involvement in the Early Years Inclusion programme provides effective links with other pre-school settings to share best practice. There are also effective transition plans in place with a number of local primary schools to encourage a smooth transition to the next stage of learning for the children.
- There has recently been a turnover in early years specialists from the Early Years Organisation. The current early years specialist has been working well with the staff for a month and has continued with the appropriate focus to develop planning and evaluations leading to further development in the children's learning.
- The staff have developed effective links with parents through, for example, the informative monthly newsletters, the regular meetings to discuss the children's development and the detailed information on the parents' notice board.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Ballyronan Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement, in particular, the need to develop further the planning and provision for outdoor play.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYRONAN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, MAGHERAFELT

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	17	
Attending part-time		14
Under 3 years of age*	0	
Funded by Department of Education	17	
With statement of special educational needs	0	
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	2	
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	
With English as an additional language	1	
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	24
Average attendance for the previous year.	87.5%
Number of days open in previous school year	183

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9:00 am-11:30 am	12:00 pm-2:00pm (2 days, weekly)

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0	

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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