

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Banana Bunch Playgroup  
Whitehead, County Antrim

Report of an inspection in  
October 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## 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 Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#).

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.

Six of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were highly positive about the quality of the care and the pre-school provision being provided. The staff responses to the questionnaires were unavailable due to technical difficulties.

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children<sup>1</sup>, 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

Banana Bunch Pre-school Playgroup is located in the Presbyterian Church halls in Whitehead. Since the last inspection, a new leader has been appointed and took up post in 2014. The staff set out and clear equipment on a daily basis due to the shared nature of the accommodation. The children come from a wide catchment area. A small number of younger children are admitted through the year in addition to supplement the funded pre-school places.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of a Day Nursery this refers only to the DE-funded pre-school provision.

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children choose activities independently and settle quickly to their play; most of them remain focused and can play in a sustained and co-operative manner during the session both in the playroom and outside in the garden area.
- They make confident and creative use of the art materials to experiment with colour and shape, make junk models and paint early representations of people and objects. The children are developing well their exploration of musical sounds and rhythm as they experiment with a range of musical instruments.
- A majority of the children communicate confidently to the staff and one another during their play; they often develop well their ideas during house and construction play. Their communication skills and their ideas are not being fully developed however, as a consequence of the staff not consistently asking open-ended questions nor modelling appropriate language.
- There is a high level of interest in mark-making, early experimental writing and in sorting, matching and counting as a natural part of play. They are developing their fine motor skills well using a wide range of tools and materials.
- The children have a good understanding of the feelings of others and they are learning about dental care, for example, through relevant topics and visitors to the playgroup. They are not being prompted by the staff to develop their independent care of the environment in the playgroup.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are, beginning to settle in and co-operate with the daily routines, with appropriate adult support and guidance.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- A majority of the interactions between the staff and the children are effective in promoting the children's social skills, generating an interest in books, and in promoting close observation and discussion of items around the play room. In the less effective practice, in approximately a third of the interactions observed, the staff use closed questions, are not well enough deployed in the play areas and miss opportunities to follow through on the children's own ideas to develop their language and extend their learning.
- The staff require further training to develop their skills and implement the updated special educational needs policy.
- The planning and assessment carried out by the staff is not well enough developed to ensure that the learning programme is matched closely to the range of needs of the children at the time of year. The staff team do, however, meet regularly to plan and evaluate an interesting pre-school programme covering the six areas of learning and are beginning to use their assessment information to adapt the planning to meet the needs of individual children.

- The staff set up an inviting and attractive range of activities in distinct areas of play which support well the children's independent choices. The children's own art work, relevant photographs and real items enhance the learning environment. The resources in the attractive outdoor area are being developed and add positively to the children's experiences.
- The quality of pastoral care is good. The staff are welcoming and dedicated to the welfare and development of the children; they promote the children's health and well-being through their provision.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Leadership and management roles and responsibilities are inadequately developed. For example, development planning and self-evaluation is neither systematic nor does it include the full staff team. Effective training and support is required to address these areas for development.
- The leader administers the playgroup well and promotes improvements such as: providing a lending library for parents, updating policy documents, arranging enjoyable visits and inviting visitors to enhance the children's learning.
- The committee are supportive of the work of the staff and have made a useful contribution to fundraising and maintaining the financial viability of the playgroup. The independent early year's specialist provides relevant support and guidance which needs to be more consistently implemented by the staff. The committee, along with the early year's specialist, need to be more involved in monitoring the quality of the provision and the development planning process.
- The parents are kept informed about the planned programme and their children's progress. There are useful links with the main feeder primary school to help the children make a smooth transition into year one.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The designated committee member responsible for child protection needs to access specific child protection training and training for this role; and committee members sitting on appointment panels need to receive specific training on recruitment and vetting of staff.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Banana Bunch Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop consistently high quality engagement by all staff with the children to promote their learning;
- build the skill and capacity of the staff to identify, plan for and support effectively those children identified with special educational needs;

- define clearly and develop further the roles and responsibilities of leadership and the management group, including an effective approach to planning and evaluation; and
- provide the necessary safeguarding training.

The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BANANA BUNCH PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1
Attending part-time	35
Funded by Department of Education	15
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	8

\* On 1 July.

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

Average attendance for the previous year.	91%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
	2.75 hours	

3. Details of staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	5

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

**Source:** data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

# fewer than 5



**Health and Safety**

1. The toddler slide is too small for safe use by the pre-school children and should be removed.
2. The staff need to remind the children regularly about using equipment safely.

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