

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bangor Abbey Playgroup,
Bangor, County Down

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

CUSTOMER
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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, 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.

The questionnaires returned by the staff indicated high levels of satisfaction with the centres work. There were no questionnaires returned by the parents.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children¹, 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

Since the last inspection in 2007, Bangor Abbey Playgroup has relocated to Clandeboye Primary School in Bangor. The group is accommodated within three spacious upstairs classrooms that are solely for their use. The staff have organised the activities across two of the rooms to provide an 'open plan' access to all of the activities and to ensure the best use of all of the space; the children are encouraged to choose freely from the activities in both rooms. The new location provides good indoor facilities; an outdoor play area is available and the children have access to the primary school hall. At the time of the inspection one of the leaders was on leave; a new joint leader took up post in September 2016.

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	Good

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

5. Achievements and standards

- Most of the children are well settled and behave well. They relate well to one another, and some firm friendships are developing. The children are at ease with the staff and turn to them for support with their learning.
- Many of the children are acquiring good manipulative skills using small tools such as scissors and pencils; as a result they can produce representational drawings and paintings; some are attempting to write letters in their own names.
- Most of the children can attend to their own needs however they require more opportunities to develop their independence, for example, by labelling their own work or cleaning up spills at the water play.

6. Provision for learning

- Overall, the range of activities provided offers good opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's personal, social and emotional; early mathematics skills, language acquisition are particular strengths of the curriculum.
- The playgroup has a positive ethos; the staff provide a secure, supportive environment, which is helping the children grow in confidence.
- The playrooms are bright and spacious; good use is made of a wide range of the children's art work, posters, photographs and interest areas to create colourful displays around the playgroup.
- Generally, the new planning format outlines an appropriate programme for the children, designed to foster their all-round development. It identifies progression and the many facets of learning inherent in the various aspects of play. A good range of themes and topics is used to introduce a variety of interesting activities in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- While the children have regular opportunities to engage in outdoor play, when the weather permits and in addition have access to indoor physical activities in the large school hall and in one of the upstairs rooms, overall there is a need to plan for a more systematic development of a wider range of physical skills both indoors and outdoors that progress steadily over the year.
- The staff have developed an appropriate method of recording their observations of the children's responses to play however, observations are not maintained on all of the children. More complete information gathering is needed to inform planning to meet more fully the needs of all individuals.
- The staff provide the children with sustained support during play; their interaction and involvement with the children is often of a good quality. They engage the children in valuable discussions about their play and their experiences. At times, there are too many staff in one area of play; the staff need to reduce the adult-child ratio to allow the children to have sufficient opportunities to develop their peer negotiation and problem solving skills without over direction from the adults.

- Good provision is made for the children with special educational needs; the children are well integrated into all of the activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The new joint leader has only been in post for a short time; already she is having a positive impact on improving the quality of aspects of the provision. Under the guidance of the new leader the staff are developing well the process of self-evaluation; they have identified appropriate key areas for further development. The staff value the support provided by the centre's independent early years specialist it will be important that she now works with the new team to inform future priorities and to support the staff in rigorous evaluation of the practice.
- There are good links with the parents; they are invited to help out and share their talents with the children. A regular newsletter provides some useful information for the parents as the staff continue to develop this they should provide more information for the parents on how they can support their children with their learning.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Bangor Abbey Playgroup 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.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1. Details of children

Number of children:	
Attending full-time	N/A
Attending part-time	18
Under 3 years of age*	
Funded by Department of Education	18
With statement of special educational needs	
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	***
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	N/A

* On 1 July.

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

*** Denotes a number less than 5.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average attendance for the previous year.	98%
Number of days open in previous school year	184

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	3 Hours	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ****	
Students	0
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

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