

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Bright Sparks Pre-School, Crawfordsburn, County Down

Voluntary Playgroup DE Ref No: 4BB-0584

Report of an Inspection in October 2019

CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Bright Sparks Pre-School operates in purpose-built mobile accommodation within the grounds of Crawfordsburn Primary School. The pre-school has its own outdoor learning area and the children also use the primary school's library, hall and outdoor spaces. Most of the children who attend come from the local and wider surrounding area. The leadership and staffing have remained unchanged since the last inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	20
Funded by Department of Education	20
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	94
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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Forty-five per cent of the parents replied to the confidential questionnaire; they indicated very high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the pre-school's provision for the children's learning and care. In particular, the parents highlighted the dedication and openness of the staff, the effective communication strategies and the all-round progress their children were making. All of the staff responded to the questionnaire; their responses and written comments praised the positive team approach to their work and their opportunities to reflect on and contribute meaningfully to the pre-school's improvement work. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the pre-school leader and staff, a representative of the management committee and the pre-school's independent early years specialist.

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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very well-settled and confident in their indoor and outdoor learning areas. They co-operate in a friendly way with their peers, share their resources and approach the adults for help when they require it. Most of the children play with sustained interest in their self-chosen activities for extended periods.
- The children's personal, social and emotional development is well established; most access and use resources independently, such as, books from the sensory den and loose parts to extend their construction play, and they attend to their own needs. The children use their imaginative ideas creatively in the role play and art areas. They respond positively to the staff's high expectations and praise. As a result, they behave very well and show respect for others and their equipment.
- The children play productively in the stimulating activities indoors and outdoors. They listen with interest to stories and carry out absorbing mathematical and scientific investigations which connect their learning in meaningful ways. The children build their knowledge of mathematical and positional language in relevant contexts across the six learning areas. They are developing a sound understanding of early mathematical concepts, including number, measures, shape and space, both in their daily routines and across the various topics they explore and they are curious to investigate the world around them. A significant minority are developing well their early mark-making skills.
- All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making very good continuous progress across almost all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a bright and well-organised learning environment in the playroom and outdoors; all of the learning spaces and resources are used effectively to enhance and extend the children's learning. The variety and progression in the learning activities engages the children well and develops their wider skills.
- The staff interactions focus on extending the children's oral language and vocabulary and modelling questions across all aspects of the provision. In the most effective practice the staff make very good use of spontaneous opportunities to increase the children's learning. They support them in exploring and taking forward their own ideas independently and developing further their creative solutions and problem-solving skills.

- The pre-school programme provides a very good balance of free play both indoors and outdoors alongside more structured activities. The detailed written planning ensures progression across the learning areas; the staff also take careful account of the children's individual responses and interests to extend their spontaneous learning. The staff know the children very well and use digital software to record systematically the information along with photographic and video evidence both to inform the future planning and to share regularly with the parents.
- The staff support sensitively children with additional needs and ensure that they are included fully in the various activities. There is effective communication with the parents and outside agencies to plan for the use of strategies to bring about continuous progress in the children's learning and their all-round development.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and the children's outcomes. The staff develop continuously the positive relationships and learning environment to nurture the children's well-being and all-round development.

7. Leadership and management

- The skilled leadership and management of the pre-school, together with the dedicated management committee, promote effective and collaborative teamwork to bring about continuous improvement in the provision and the children's outcomes.
- The development plan contains appropriate strategic priorities. The systematic and detailed approach to self-evaluation impacts positively on all areas of the pre-school's provision.
- The pre-school is supported by an independent early years specialist, who works effectively with the leadership and staff team to identify key priorities for improvement and provide appropriate support and challenge for the leadership in addressing them.
- The pre-school has productive links with the parents, relevant agencies, local pre-schools and the adjacent primary school which benefit directly the children. For example, the staff use regularly resources such as the primary school library, hall and grounds to enrich and extend the children's learning.

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

Bright Sparks Pre-school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <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:

- meetings with those involved with leadership and management, including the playroom leader and staff team, the independent early years specialist and representatives of the management committee; 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 management¹:

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

¹ 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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