

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Busy Bees Playgroup, Hillsborough, County Down

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (4AB-0508)

Report of an Inspection in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

Busy Bees Playgroup operates in Hope Church on the Moira Road, close to the village of Hillsborough. The setting operates a dual part-time session in the morning. The leader, deputy leader and almost all of the staff have been in post since the last inspection in 2013. A temporary Early Years Specialist (EYS) has been in post from September 2018. A new chairperson of the management committee was appointed in October 2018.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	22	23
Funded by Department of Education	22	23
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	0
With English as an additional language	0	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	12
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	182

Source: data provided by the setting.

** 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

A significant minority of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In written comments the parents praised the welcoming environment created by the friendly, caring and approachable staff who make learning meaningful and enjoyable for all of the children. Most of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. A summary of the questionnaire responses were shared with the leader, staff and representatives from the management committee.

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	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Requires significant improvement
Quality of provision	Requires urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Requires significant improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- Overall, the children's behaviour and their response to the staff, falls well below the standard expected for the time of year. A significant minority of children are inattentive during story time and this impacts on the development of all of the children's listening skills.
- The children's participation in role-play is also underdeveloped for the time of year. This is due, in part, to the lack of stimulating authentic and real resources in the home corner to encourage the children's experimentation and engagement.
- Those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning do not make sufficient progress.
- While a very small number of children refer to books during playtime, a majority have a good interest in mark making and experimental writing. The children's artwork is displayed attractively around the room and annotated with their thoughts and ideas. During the inspection, a majority of the children expressed their ideas through painting and creating models in the construction area.
- Most of the children demonstrate an early awareness of mathematical concepts and language as they count, measure, explore shape and colour and make comparisons as an integral part of their play.

6. Quality of provision

- Overall, the staff do not have a sufficiently developed shared understanding of how to promote purposeful play. While the staff engage warmly with the children, their interactions are brief; there are too many missed opportunities to extend the children's language and learning through play. On occasions, the behaviour of a small number of children diverts the staff from having meaningful interaction with the children. The staff are not consistent in their use of appropriate behaviour management strategies to meet fully the needs of all the children and encourage settled and productive play.
- While the staff plan a programme which includes all areas of the pre-school curriculum, the children are insufficiently challenged and have not made the expected progress for the time of year in all areas of the pre-school curriculum, in particular, the children's personal, social and emotional development and language and communication. Some aspects of the playgroup's early mathematical programme are too formal and not age and stage appropriate. The outdoor learning environment requires improvement.

- The staff have put in place individual education plans to support a small number of children who have been identified with additional needs. However, the targets within the plans lack the detail required to measure the children's progress effectively and the staff use a limited range of strategies to support the children.
- Although detailed, the short-term planning does not guide the staff effectively in their day-to-day interactions with the children. While all staff make regular observations of the children's learning, there is variation in the quality of the observations between the two playrooms.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare does not impact positively enough on learning and teaching, and outcomes. Positive behaviour is not promoted consistently enough in the setting which is impacting negatively on the children's learning.

7. Leadership and management

- During the regular visits from the EYS, the staff have been advised of a number of appropriate areas which require attention. However, the priorities identified by the EYS and the staff do not address important aspects of the current and immediate needs of the children, in particular: the children's personal, social and emotional development; the implementation of effective behaviour management strategies; and, supporting more effectively those children who have additional needs.
- The current processes for self-evaluation are not effective in identifying the most important areas for improvement and are not impacting enough on the quality of the provision and better outcomes for the children.
- The management committee are supportive of the staff and are aware of the current challenges within the setting. The management committee is not sufficiently informed about the work of the playgroup through regular and detailed reports from the leadership, in particular, the priorities the staff have identified through self-evaluation and progress that has been made.
- Overall, the staff have good links with the parents. The staff have introduced the 'Big Bedtime Read' initiative and provide the parents with resources to use at home to help the children with their learning.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments.

However, Busy Bees Playgroup needs to:

- ensure the designated person on the management committee has received the relevant training.

9. Overall effectiveness

Busy Bees Playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop and implement effective behaviour management strategies;
- improve the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum, in particular, the children's personal, social and emotional and language development;
- improve the quality of provision and outcomes for those children identified as having additional needs;
- improve the quality of staff interactions with the children; and
- develop a robust process of self-evaluation and action planning leading to improvement.

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 18 to 24 months.

Health and safety

1. There is a lack of available free space in the playroom to enable all of the children, including those with additional or special educational needs, to work safely and access the resources freely.

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:

- 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:

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

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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