

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Castlerock Community
Playgroup, Coleraine,
County Londonderry

Report of an inspection in
May 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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

Almost all of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaire. Overall, the responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the provision. A small number of the parents responded to the questionnaire and all were highly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup.

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

Castlerock Community Playgroup is situated in a large hall which is shared with a number of community groups. The hall is owned by the Scout Association and maintained by Coleraine Borough Council. The centre has access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Since the last inspection in 2006, the leader and most of the staff are newly appointed.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

| Overall effectiveness | High level of capacity for sustained improvement |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Achievements and standards | Very good |
| Provision for learning | Very good |
| Leadership and management | Very good |

5. Achievements and standards

- The children sustain purposeful, settled and imaginative play for lengthy periods of time. They have a very good understanding of the routines of the day. Their play is amicable and collaborative; they take turns and, share their ideas and the resources. The children are confident to organise their play, make suggestions to the staff and are readily making choices which indicate that they are secure and familiar with the wide range of materials in the playgroup. The children's behaviour is excellent.
- The children are developing appropriate speech and language skills and they have very good levels of concentration. They listen attentively to stories and engage in conversations at snack-time and during play. The children apply and use mathematical language to convey appropriate understanding about the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and understand the use of money in the cafe play area.
- The children enjoy energetic play in the garden area and dig enthusiastically in the soil and plant seeds. Caring for the plants and small creatures is developing effectively the children's awareness of the World Around Us. The children's fine motor skills are well developed; they draw, paint pictures and use scissors competently.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff plan as a team and have developed a comprehensive programme for the children which includes all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They take account of, and include, planning for the children's spontaneous interests and needs. The key worker system, where each member of staff is involved in the assessment of the children's learning, is effective and informs the planned programme.
- An attractive learning environment with authentic resources enriches the children's broad and balanced learning experiences and encourages high levels of exploration, investigation and sensory learning. The addition of a stimulating outdoor play area extends the children's opportunities for physical development and scientific awareness of growing and caring for plants. The organisation of the day is used effectively to promote learning from the snack routine and transitions.
- The sustained interaction of the staff with the children promotes effectively their learning and provokes enquiry. The use of junk materials and real fruit and vegetables stimulates the children to ask questions. The children have very good opportunities to investigate the properties of materials and to create interesting models of animals and homes. The staff use open-ended questions and extend effectively the children's thinking and language development.
- The staff have established effective links with support staff in order to follow appropriate programmes to help the children improve their language skills.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There is a welcoming ethos and very good working relationships between the children, the staff and the parents. The staff know the children well and respond with care to their needs and interests.

- The playgroup gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity; the children prepare fruit salad for the snack, enjoy healthy foods and participate in a varied range of energetic physical activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup leader and staff sustain high quality provision that meets consistently the needs of the children through their reflective approach and effective teamwork.
- The advice, guidance and support provided by the early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation inform effectively the action-planning for improvement process.
- The staff have developed effective links with the parents through, for example, regular informative newsletters and information sessions. The playgroup manages effectively a very limited budget to sustain the highly effective pre-school programme; it is challenged significantly by the loss of funding due to parental choice in transferring children, throughout the school year, to reception groups in primary schools.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding. The arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following areas need to be addressed:
 - the staff need to develop further their shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding the children; and
 - to update the parents of changes to the safeguarding policy.

8. Overall effectiveness

Castlerock Community Playgroup 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.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CASTLEROCK COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, COLERAINE

1. Details of children

| Number of children: | Class 1 |
|---|----------------|
| Attending full-time | 22 |
| Attending part-time | 0 |
| Under 3 years of age* | 0 |
| 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 | 1 |
| At CoP stages 3 or 4** | 0 |
| At CoP stages 1 or 2** | 0 |
| With English as an additional language | 0 |
| Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school | 6 |

* 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. | 91 |
| Average attendance for the previous year. | 93% |
| Number of days open in previous school year | 189 |

2. Duration of sessions

| Full-time | Part-time: am | Part-time: pm |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2.5 hours | |

3. Details of staff

| Number of: | Full-time | Part-time |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Staff including, Teachers/Leaders | 4 | |
| Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification | 4 | |
| Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification | 0 | |
| New appointments within the previous 12 months | 1 | |

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students | 2 |
| Trainees | 0 |

*** Total placements since September of current year

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