

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Castlewellan Community
Playgroup, County Down

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Castlewellan Community Playgroup is located in Castlewellan Community Centre. Since the last inspection, a new deputy leader and two part-time staff have been appointed.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	14	12
Attending part-time	#	8
Under 3 years of age*	#	8
Funded by Department of Education	14	12
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	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	#	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	92%
Number of days open in previous school year	188

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-eight percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; almost all of the parental responses and all of the staff responses were very positive. In the parent's additional written comments, they praised the helpful and approachable staff, the progress in the children's learning and their children's enjoyment in attending the playgroup.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important area for improvement
Leadership and management	Important area for improvement

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children are happy and settle quickly to concentrated play. A minority of the children engage in collaborative play in the role play and construction areas. The Almost all of the children are developing well their independence; they self-register on arrival, organise their snack and can put on their waterproof clothing and boots for outdoor play. Most of the children demonstrate very good levels of perseverance, completing jigsaws and labelling and filing their work before accessing other areas of play.
- Overall, the children are achieving a good standard in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum, with the exception of the world around us. Of particular significance is the children's high level of interest in mark making and enjoyment of books. During the inspection most of the children were observed counting, matching and measuring using appropriate mathematical language.

6. Quality of provision

- The World Around Us provision within the playroom and in the outdoor learning environment is an important area for improvement. The children have limited opportunities to explore, experiment and investigate the natural world around them. The staff need to review the layout of the room and the provision outdoors to ensure that all of the space is utilised effectively and resourced appropriately to maximise the children's learning; the staff have identified appropriately the need for this improvement. The development of the children's personal, social and emotional skills and language acquisition are particular strengths of the provision.
- While the short-term planning for indoor play outlines clearly the learning potential within the areas of play and cognisance is taken of the children's interests, the planning is not differentiated sufficiently to take account of the two distinct age groups within the setting. The outdoor planning requires further development to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for the children to learn across all areas of the curriculum. The staff observe the children's learning regularly, record it accurately and, as is necessary, are beginning to link well their observations to the short-term planning.
- The staff have created a child-centred learning environment where the children's work is valued and displayed in the playroom and in the public areas. A strength of the provision is the interaction between the staff and the children which is consistently of a good quality or better.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. A supportive and caring ethos pervades the playgroup where a consistent and positive approach to the management of the children's behaviour ensures that working relationships between the staff and the children are very good.

7. Leadership and management

- Self-evaluation and action plans are not sufficiently developed. The staff work very well as a team and have a clear vision for the future development of the playgroup. After a recent review of current practice, the staff amended the development plan, identifying more appropriate areas for improvement. While some recent improvement work has been undertaken to implement a more effective home time routine and to develop the outdoor provision, it will be important for the staff and the management committee to monitor the impact of this work on the outcomes for the children.
- The playgroup has effective links with parents through, for example, the monthly newsletter, which provides useful information about the intended learning and how parents can support their child's learning at home.
- 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, the playgroup needs to ensure that the hard-back notebook for complaints against staff is signed annually by the chair of the management committee.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Castlewellan Community Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to develop the planning and provision for outdoor play and the world around us; and
- to develop further the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate clearly the impact of improvement work on the outcomes for the children.

The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

Health and safety / accommodation

- There is no controlled access to the playroom.
- The razor wire, which is attached to the wall above the mud kitchen in the outdoor area, is not secure.

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

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

Details of staff

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

Number of: *	
Students	1
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

N/A not available

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <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

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

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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