

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Clonduff Playgroup, Hilltown,
County Down

Report of an Inspection in
March 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
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 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.

Twenty-one percent of parents and eighty percent of the staff responded to the online confidential questionnaires. Most of the parental responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the work of the playgroup. In particular, they highlighted the friendly and helpful staff and the excellent opportunities for their children's development of life skills. The staff questionnaire responses were wholly positive. All of the findings from the questionnaires were shared and discussed with the representatives from the management committee and the staff.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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

Clonduff Playgroup is situated in Carcullion House, Hilltown. The majority of the children come from the local area. The leader and two members of the staff were in post at the time of the last inspection in 2009. The playgroup operates two part-time play sessions on a daily basis.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour is exemplary; they show respect for one another and the adults with whom they interact through play. They exhibit high levels of independence, for example, self-registering for snack and putting on their own jumpers and boots for outdoor play. The children are highly motivated and all engage well in purposeful and sustained play both indoors and outdoors.
- All the children listen attentively during the group story session; many of the children display an interest in early mark making and a small number of children write their own names. A particular strength in the playgroup is the children's creative and imaginative play; they construct original, three-dimensional models and artwork and assume readily the various roles in, for example, the bakery.
- The children use mathematical language with confidence across all areas of learning, both in the playroom and outdoors. Their play with natural materials and real tools enable them to problem-solve and strengthen their fine motor skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination skills. The children are confident to run, balance and jump and most display appropriate gross motor skills during outdoor, energetic play.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff interactions with the children are consistently of a very good quality and, on occasions, outstanding. The staff model play, support and challenge the children to extend their use of language and thinking skills as they engage with them during play. The planning, observations and assessments are integrated effectively and guide well the work of the staff. The children's ideas are listened to by the staff who respond appropriately maximising incidental learning opportunities.
- The attractive, indoor environment provides high quality learning opportunities across the pre-school curriculum. The children's work is valued and displayed attractively throughout the playroom. The organisation of the day provides a lengthy period of freely chosen play and outdoor learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The staff model respect through their interactions with the children and one another. The working relationships at all levels promote effectively a nurturing and welcoming learning environment.
- The staff give very good attention to the promotion of healthy eating through the provision of healthy snacks which the children access independently throughout the sessions. The children have regular opportunities, weather permitting, for energetic play outdoors.

7. Leadership and management

- The highly effective team has a shared vision for providing high quality care and education to all of the children. The staff have made very good use of the Department of Education's Extended Services funding to improve the quality of the play resources provided for the children. They have identified appropriately the need to provide further detail in the action plans to promote improvement in the pre-school programme. The recently formed management committee is supportive and appreciative of the staff and they all work for the continuous improvement of the playgroup.
- There are very good links with the parents who are kept well informed through regular newsletters, open nights and fund raising social events. The staff and management committee seek the views of the parents which inform the life and work of the playgroup. Useful links are established with the local primary schools to ensure the children's smooth transition from their pre-school programme to primary school.
- The early years specialist, from the Early Years Organisation, has provided very good support for the playgroup and promotes the sharing of best practice through local cluster groups.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following area needs to be addressed:
 - relevant child protection training, when available, to be accessed by the chair and management committee members.

8. Overall effectiveness

Clonduff Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CLONDUFF PLAYGROUP, HILLTOWN

1. Details of children

| Number of children: | Class 1 | Class 2 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Attending full-time | 25 | 23 |
| Attending part-time | 0 | 0 |
| Under 3 years of age* | 0 | 0 |
| Funded by Department of Education | 25 | 23 |
| With statement of special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| At CoP stages 3 or 4** | 0 | 0 |
| At CoP stages 1 or 2** | 0 | 0 |
| With English as an additional language | 0 | 0 |
| Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school | 0 | 0 |

* 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. | 10% |
| Average attendance for the previous year. | 82% |
| Number of days open in previous school year | 188 |

2. Duration of sessions

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

3. Details of staff

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

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students | 1 |
| Trainees | 0 |

*** Total placements since September of current year

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