

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cloughmills Early Years,
Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
November 2014

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning 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 discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The staff and parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup.

2. Context

Cloughmills Early Years operates in premises within the grounds of Cloughmills Primary School in the village of Cloughmills, County Antrim. At the time of the inspection, the leader was in her second year in the playgroup.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Very good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and Standards

- The children are relaxed and emotionally secure. They approach one another, the staff and other adults confidently and understand the staff's expectations for them. The children settle eagerly to their play activities and take high levels of responsibility for many aspects of their learning. For example, most can organise well the use of the time they have available for free play, choosing and using creatively the varied resources on offer. children's behaviour is very good; they treat one another, the adults and their play resources and equipment with respect.
- Most of the children show very good progress in their developing language and can explain and share what they are doing. Most are very interested in browsing books and other print resources; they are developing well their early mark-making and understand that print can provide information as well as tell stories.
- The children are building well their early understanding of important mathematical concepts; a majority use proficiently a range of shape and number vocabulary in the context of their free play and more structured activities. They explore and investigate a wide range of natural materials and show high levels of curiosity in their environment. The children's representational artwork contains attention to detail, demonstrating the progression in their fine motor skills and how well they manipulate various tools and materials.
- The children move freely and calmly amongst the various play areas. They play well independently and in collaboration with others for prolonged periods, absorbed fully in their chosen activities. Overall, the children demonstrate very good progress in their development in relation to the time of the year across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; this is evident in the responsibility they take for managing important aspects of their personal organisation and regular routines.

6. Provision

- The staff create a stimulating and well-organised learning environment, containing engaging equipment and resources, which appeals well to the children's interests and promotes and extends the children's self-reliance. They provide high quality learning experiences in the World Around Us to develop the children's interest and inquisitiveness and to provide them with meaningful opportunities to investigate and try out their ideas.
- The staff's interactions with the children are consistently of a good or better standard; they enjoy spending time talking and listening to the children about their learning and engaging their curiosity. In the best practice, the staff extend the children's thinking through effective open-ended questions and the timely infusion of important vocabulary at the point of learning. As a result, many of the children can give thoughtful and extended responses to explain their thoughts and ideas.
- The planned programme is comprehensive and provides for balance and progression in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum. Appropriately, the staff have already identified the need to develop further the outdoor learning.

- The staff have made an effective start to reviewing the systems in place for observing, assessing and recording the children's progress. In taking this work forward, they need to reflect more fully on the quality of the children's responses to inform the future planning to enable each child to achieve their fullest potential.
- The quality of pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. The adults know the children very well and work effectively as a team to ensure that their individual needs are well met. The caring and child-centred ethos is also evident in the very responsive ways in which the adults engage with the children in their free play activities.
- The playgroup gives good attention to developing the children's early understanding of healthy lifestyles; the children are provided with healthy snack choices and regular physical activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader is a very good learning role model for the children and the staff and demonstrates clear and thoughtful vision in relation to bringing about the continuous improvement of the playgroup's provision. She collaborates successfully with the rest of the skilful staff team in developing further all aspects of the children's learning. The dedicated support given by the management committee also contributes significantly to this important work.
- There are effective, systematic processes in place to evaluate the provision and to inform appropriate improvement actions. The associated action plans take good account of the playgroup's key priorities and guide the improvement actions well.
- The playgroup has built up a good range of links and partnerships with the parents, the community and various external agencies to support and extend the staff's work with the children. The parents are welcomed into the playgroup and are given detailed information about the provision. Most of the children transfer to the local primary school and relevant information about the children's progress is provided to the year-one teacher, supporting effective transitional arrangements from pre-school to year one.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the early years organisation (EYO) provides effective support to develop the provision. The staff are benefitting from the Early Years Special Educational Needs Capacity Building pilot and further professional development through cluster meetings and, appropriately, they are developing arrangements to sustain and embed this training within the pre-school programme.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	26	
in their immediate pre-school year	26	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	26	
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	
with English as an additional language	0	
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	
Attendance:		
attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	91%	

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
3 hours	-

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