

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dara Pre-School, Armagh City

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
March 2018



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

Dara Pre-School is a voluntary playgroup located off the Killylea Road in Armagh City. Since the last inspection a new leader and early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation have been appointed. The staff deliver the pre-school programme through the High Scope methodology.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	26
Funded by Department of Education	26
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	5
With English as an additional language	6
Number of children who transferred from a Sure Start 2 year old programme	6

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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

All of the staff completed the confidential questionnaire. The responses were all very positive and the written responses highlighted the strong sense of team spirit at all levels. A small number of parents responded to the questionnaire. The responses were very positive and there were no additional written comments.

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	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children are very well settled and engage for long periods in sustained and purposeful play and often produce work of a high quality. They interact very well with each other and with the staff, persevere with tasks and are very independent in making choices for play and in meeting their own needs.
- The children have good listening skills, can follow instructions and participate well in the group activities and the necessary routines of the day. They explore and investigate the attractively presented learning environment and clearly enjoy the learning opportunities available to them both indoors and outdoors. The children's written records and samples of their work folders demonstrate progress in their learning and development to date. Their representational art work, displayed around the playgroup, shows close attention to detail and is age and stage appropriate for the time of year.
- The children are respectful and show care for their work environment; they are mannerly, handle books with care and participate well in setting up and tidying away resources.
- The children who have English as an additional language and those identified with additional needs are well-integrated within the group.

6. Quality of provision

- The written planning and the methods of observing, recording and assessing the children's progress and development are comprehensive and guide the staff very well in their work with the children. The planning identifies clearly the learning potential of the planned activities and takes appropriate account of the individual needs, interests and responses of all the children to ensure variety, challenge and progression in their learning.
- There is relevant documentation available to outline the support provided and the progress made for those children who require assistance with aspects of their learning and development. The information is shared with the parents and support agencies to help ensure the children's needs are met.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children are consistently of a very high standard. The staff plan and use every opportunity to develop the children's language and learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. They join willingly in the children's play and generate a great sense of fun in many of the activities. The staff build effectively on the children's personal interests and experiences, ask open ended questions, recap on previous learning and promote an awareness of the world around them.

- The organisation of the day is very well structured and provides for lengthy periods of indoor and outdoor play with smooth transitions between key times in the programme.
- The staff present a very attractive and highly organised learning environment for the children both indoors and outdoors. The available space provides excellent opportunities for the staff and children to participate in collaborative play and for the staff to ensure consistency in their approach to learning and teaching. There is an excellent range of good quality resources with many natural and authentic items incorporated into the areas of play. The children have easy access to almost all of the resources to help with their independent choice of activity.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on their learning and development. The children are forming positive relationships with the adults and one another which is evident in their personal and social skills.

7. Leadership and management

- The process of self-evaluation and development planning is well embedded. The staff have identified appropriate priorities for improvement and development and have collated relevant evidence to support these. The associated action plans guide the work of the staff in helping to ensure high quality preschool provision at all levels.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation is new to the playgroup this academic year and has supported the staff well in their work. The management group work tirelessly to raise the profile of the playgroup in the local community and are highly supportive of the staff, parents and children.
- The playgroup has implemented many early years' initiatives and works in partnership with the parents to encourage them to play an active role in the education of their children. Effective links have been established with relevant agencies and the main feeder primary schools for the benefit of the children.

8. Safeguarding

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

9. Overall effectiveness

Dara Pre-School 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.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.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 early years specialist and chair of 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

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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