

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Derrytrasna Playgroup,  
Craigavon, Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2015

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## 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:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
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.

All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the work of the playgroup.

## 2. Context

Derrytrasna Playgroup is located in the grounds of St. Mary's Primary School, Derrytrasna. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has moved to new purpose-built mobile accommodation. At the time of the inspection, there were twelve pre-school and eighteen underage children enrolled in the playgroup. The children come from a wide catchment area.

## 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

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- Almost all of the children settle quickly to their chosen activity and engage readily with the staff and visitors to the playgroup. Most of the children play collaboratively and purposefully; however, the staff need to apply the behaviour management strategies more consistently with the small number of children who become less settled or engaged, at times.
- The children engage well in imaginative role play and most are confident in using a range of small and large tools and equipment. They listen attentively during the large group story sessions and are keen to join in rhymes and songs. Many of the children's individual drawings and paintings are representational and show good attention to detail.
- The organisation of some of the transition times needs to be reviewed in order to make more effective use of all time for learning.

## **6. Provision**

- There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the playgroup and the working relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff are caring and supportive to the children. The adults work very well as a team in the best interests of the children.
- The staff often engage in purposeful interactions with the children, promoting effectively their self-esteem and language. In the best practice observed, the adults responded effectively to the children's interests, suggestions and needs and used skilful questioning to promote their thinking. On a number of occasions, the staff missed opportunities to encourage the children to provide extended responses to questions and to exploit fully the learning potential of all the activities and routines.
- The staff are in the process of trialling a new approach to planning and will review this method at the end of the academic year. Although the written planning outlines a range of activities for the children across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, it needs to take more account of the distinct groups of children within the playgroup and ensure that the links made between the observations of the children responses and the planning are acted on and included in any evaluations.
- The staff know the children very well and collate valuable observations and records for each child. They now need to identify clear strategies for individual children and ensure there is sufficient challenge and progression in the learning activities for all of the children in the group.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is a key strength in the playgroup's provision. The strengths include: the very positive working relationships at all levels; the high priority given by the staff to the care and well-being of the children; and, the friendly and welcoming atmosphere that permeates the playgroup.
- The playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

- The playgroup gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and life-styles including, for example, the provision of a healthy snack.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- All of the staff, and members of the management committee work collaboratively and are all fully committed to the best outcomes for the children and the families in the area.
- Although the playgroup has been part of the Department of Education's pre-school programme for several years, the processes of self-evaluation and development planning are still at an early stage. The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation needs to work closely with the staff to prioritise the areas identified for improvement in this report.

## **8. Conclusion**

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

The areas for further development are the need:

- to apply the behaviour management strategies more consistently with the small number of children who become less settled or engaged at times;
- for the staff to exploit fully the learning potential of all the activities and routines;
- to develop further the planning as identified in the report; and
- develop further the processes of self-evaluation and development planning.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION DERRYTRASNA PLAYGROUP

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	30	
in their immediate pre-school year	12	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	12	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	
with English as an additional language	0	
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

### 2. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>
3 hours	-

### 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within previous 12 months		

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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