

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Drumaness Cross-Community  
Playgroup, Ballynahinch, County  
Down

Report of an inspection in  
October 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## 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, 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.

Forty-five percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; all responses were wholly positive. In the parent's additional written comments, they praised the caring, approachable and dedicated staff and highlighted the children's enjoyment in attending the playgroup.

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children<sup>1</sup>, 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

Drumaness Cross-Community Playgroup is located in mobile accommodation in the grounds of Christ the King Primary School. The children attending the playgroup come from the village of Drumaness and the surrounding rural area. The playgroup operates an afternoon session three days per week. A new leader was appointed in September 2014.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

<sup>1</sup> In the case of a Day Nursery this refers only to the DE-funded pre-school provision.

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are developing positive attitudes to their learning. Almost all of them are familiar with the daily routines and demonstrate very good levels of independence, using their symbols to select where to play. The children settle very quickly to purposeful and concentrated play alongside their peers and a minority engage in collaborative play in the creative and role play areas. Almost all of the children are developing very good social skills and are confident in their interactions with one another and with adults.
- Most of the children are developing well their language and communication skills. They listen attentively to instructions and stories and engage actively in rhymes, songs and group discussions. Most of the children are interested in mark-making and are using a range of writing tools to express their ideas through drawings and paintings. The children are developing well their awareness that print carries meaning and can label their work with their name and symbol. During the inspection, the children were observed counting, weighing, sorting and matching using appropriate mathematical language.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The staff create a child-centred learning environment where the children's work is displayed attractively and annotated with the children's thoughts and ideas. Best use has been made of the available space to ensure that the children have easy access to resources to enhance their play.
- Overall, the quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is good. In the best practice, the staff use well incidental opportunities to develop the children's language and extend their thinking as they work alongside them.
- The indoor play programme provides good to very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The provision for the world around us, the arts and the children's physical development through outdoor play is not as well developed.
- The staff are linking information gathered from observations of the children well to the planning, ensuring the programme is focused on meeting the individual needs of the children.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. The staff have created a happy, caring and safe learning environment where the personal, social and emotional needs of each child are met very well through positive behaviour management strategies.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- All of the staff work effectively as a team and have a clear vision for the future development of the playgroup. The management committee have supported the staff very well through the additional allocation of time for the staff to plan together; this has impacted significantly on the quality of the planning.
- An independent early years specialist gives very good levels of support to the staff. She provides clear guidance and direction and promotes a culture of improvement.

- The playgroup is at the start of a new three year development plan which outlines clearly appropriate areas for improvement. While self-evaluation is not well developed, an evolving culture is evident through the recent improvements made by staff to the provision in the home corner, library area and water play.
- Parents and carers are kept well-informed of how they can support their children through regular contact with the staff and the informative monthly newsletter. There are very good links with the local primary school and with members of the local community who are supporting the playgroup with the development of the outdoor area.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children which broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. There is a need to review risk assessments for external trips.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Drumaness Cross-Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There is an area for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is to bring about further improvement in the outdoor play provision through more effective action planning and self-evaluation.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON DRUMANESS CROSS-COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	20
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	20
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	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

\* 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.	#
Average attendance for the previous year.	75%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	8.45 am–11.15 am	

3. Details of staff

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

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

**Source:** data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

# fewer than 5

N/A not available

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