

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dunnaman Children's Centre,
Kilkeel, County Down

Report of an Inspection in
April 2016

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 centre manager;
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires; and
- a meeting with the permanent representative from the Early Years Organisation and a meeting with the Education Authority representative from the Early Years Inclusion Service.

There were no parental responses to the confidential questionnaire. All of the staff responded to the questionnaire and were wholly positive about the life and work of the Children's Centre.

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

Dunnaman Children's Centre is situated within a residential area just off the Newry Road between Kilkeel and Rostrevor. All of the children attending the centre come from the surrounding area. A recent programme of significant refurbishment has created a more spacious indoor play area and new outdoor resources and play surfaces.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and well-behaved; they are keen to engage with staff and show consideration and kindness to their peers through sharing and turn taking. They have high levels of independence and self-help skills, accessing freely further resources to create imaginative role-play activities. The children use independently timers to share access to popular activities, self-register and tidy the resources before moving to another activity.
- All of the children are developing early writing skills; they can recognise their own name and those of their peers and almost all can attempt to write their name. They show a keen interest in reading books and enjoy listening to stories, often asking the staff to read during the play session. The children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts such as number, shape, and measures and can use mathematical language appropriately to express their ideas including the use of prepositional language and size comparisons.
- The children create imaginative drawings and junk-models which are annotated and displayed with the children's thoughts and ideas. Their fine motor skills are developing well and they use skilfully writing tools, scissors and different forms of adhesive to experiment in their play activities.

6. Provision for learning

- The recently refurbished indoor and outdoor facilities provide the children with a well-organised, safe and relaxing play area. The extensive range of children's work is displayed around the playroom to create a nurturing and child-centred learning environment. The staff use the indoor and outdoor wall displays to engage effectively the children in discussion and extend their learning.
- The adult interactions with the children are highly effective; the staff respond sensitively to the children's ideas and interests, model appropriate topic-based language and ask open-ended questions to extend the children's ideas and reasoning. A particular strength of the provision is the staff's engagement with the children in developing mathematical language within relevant contexts, for example, discussion of halves and wholes at the snack table or comparison of height in the outdoor chalk board area.
- The children have access to a wide range of resources including natural materials and authentic equipment, for example in the house corner and the hospital. The outdoor play area provides a natural extension to the activities available indoors and the children can develop their play using a further selection of natural and commercial resources. Of particular note is the imaginative way in which staff have used the relatively limited outdoor space to create a covered kitchen which provides a stimulating play area for the children.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the playgroup is outstanding. There are excellent working relationships at all levels and the staff show a strong commitment to the children and to the community in which they work. They know the children and their families well and have high expectations across all aspects of the children's learning and development of social skills.

- The children with additional learning needs are identified early, individual education plans are in place and the children's progress is monitored and reviewed regularly through observations and evaluation. The staff have identified the need to review the format and content of the education plans to reflect more accurately the broad range of effective learning and behavioural strategies that have been put in place following advice from external agencies and additional training. The playgroup has received recent support from the local education authority under the Early Years Inclusion Service.
- The play programme is broad and well-balanced and provides very good learning experiences across the pre-school curriculum. The detailed planning is based on appropriate themes and the staff provide regular and effective opportunities for the children to contribute to the choice of activities and resources. There are effective arrangements in place for observing, recording and evaluating the children's progress.
- The playgroup gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity. The limited outdoor space is used well to provide the children with a range of opportunities for physical play; there are plans in place for the playgroup to use the facilities of a local primary school for indoor and outdoor physical play.

7. Leadership and management

- The management and staff of the playgroup have worked hard since the previous inspection to make continuous improvements to the facilities and the learning experiences of the children. The staff work collaboratively within clearly defined roles which complement and support each other. The centre manager has sourced successfully a variety of significant additional funding and has acquired additional services and support for the children and their families. The playgroup leader is an excellent role model and supported by her skilful assistant, the team provide high quality care for the children in the local community.
- The self-evaluation process is developing well; the staff are reflective and committed to on-going improvement in the playgroup. The refurbishment of the play facilities has created a wide range of identified areas for immediate development; the staff have worked hard to record the actions taken and evaluate the improvements while maintaining a clear focus on the children's learning and well-being. The staff have identified appropriately the need to refine further the self-evaluation process to ensure the manageability of the long-term pace of change and develop further the strategic documentation of self-evaluation.
- The playgroup maintains very effective links with parents; of particular note are the additional workshop and information sessions provided for the parents. There are effective links with the local primary schools which support the children's transition from pre-school to foundation stage. The staff have worked hard to develop the cross-community aspect of the playgroup and have approached successfully toddler and parent groups in local churches about the children's services they provide.

- The playgroup report they have had satisfactory support from the temporary early years specialist.
- 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 reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Dunnaman Children's Centre 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 DUNNAMAN CHILDREN'S CENTRE, KILKEEL

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	12
Attending part-time	6
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	12
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	2
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.	%
Number of days open in previous school year	

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9:15 am - 12:15 pm	

3. Details of staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

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