

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Glasswater Cross-Community
Playgroup, Crossgar, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
January 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:

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 parental responses indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the playgroup. In particular, the parents appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and the provision of a wide range of activities and resources for the children.

2. Context

Glasswater Cross Community Playgroup is located on the Ballynahinch Road, Crossgar. The children come from the village and the surrounding rural areas. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has acquired new purpose-built mobile accommodation.

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

- During the inspection, most of the children settled to purposeful and productive play; they also engaged in very good imaginative play in the imaginative play and home areas. Many of the children display a good understanding of early mathematical language and concepts; they listen attentively during the story and rhyme sessions and most are able to play and share with each other. Much of the children's art work is of a high quality and it is used very well to create colourful displays around the playroom and to celebrate their work.
- Most of the children are confident, co-operate well with the adults and with one another and some firm friendships are developing. Many of the children can recognise their own names; they are curious about the world around them as they explore or experiment with the interesting range of materials displayed in the interest area, supported by the adults. Most of the children are confident, articulate and welcoming to visitors.
- Many of the children show good concentration in their activities; they are encouraged to become independent and to make choices and decisions for themselves and their behaviour is very good.

6. Provision

- The playgroup has a very positive ethos; there is a welcoming atmosphere and caring relationships exist between the staff and the children; the children appear happy and at ease with the staff. The new mobile accommodation is of a very high standard and the staff use all available space to create interesting and well resourced areas for play.
- The education programme offers good or very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional, language development and early mathematic ideas are strengths of the programme. The staff provide an excellent range of challenging and imaginative play experiences for the children. The availability of an appropriate range of writing tools and materials provides the children with very good opportunities to develop their experimental writing skills. Captions, labels and visual instructions are used very effectively to record the children's learning experiences and to promote the development of their early reading skills. The adults use a range of books well throughout the session; they often read stories at the children's request and use reference books to extend the children's learning; the children listen attentively during the group story session.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The working relationships at all levels are very good and there are effective links and good communication with the parents, local schools and appropriate support agencies.
- The organisation of the day is effectively managed to ensure routines are well established and used well to support the children's learning and skills for life. The children are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their learning.

- The quality of the staff interactions with the children is consistently of a high quality. They engage readily with the children in their play and often act as role models prompting and encouraging them to develop their language and thinking skills.
- The written planning outlines an interesting range of activities across all aspects of the pre-school programme. As the staff continue to develop their written planning, to support the new staff members, it would be beneficial to extend the range of themes and topics and to develop further the learning inherent in the activities through the use of resources. The staff know the children well and have collated a wide range of relevant observations of the children's responses to play.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. They provide a safe and secure learning environment for the children where they are at ease with the staff and enjoy their learning.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work together effectively in the best interests of the children. The staff provide useful information for the parents regarding their child's learning and progress; the current development plan outlines the staff's intention to further develop the links with the parents.
- All of the staff have undertaken a wide range of additional training; their recent involvement in the Special Educational Needs Capacity Building pilot has led to a number of positive developments. For example, the staff have implemented new strategies and practice that includes the positive management of the children's behaviour.
- The centre's current Independent Early Year's Specialist has been supporting the playgroup for almost two years, in that time she has provided very good advice and guidance. The staff work well with the EYS taking on board her suggestions and as a result have made many important improvements to their practice.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the healthy breaks provided and the regular opportunities for physical activity outdoors and by arranging access to the nearby primary school's facilities.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of the 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 GLASSWATER CROSS-COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	24	
in their immediate pre-school year	24	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	
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	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	185

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
2½ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader		5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within previous 12 months		0

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

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