

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Gran Tots Playgroup, Swatragh, County Londonderry

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (3AB-0115)

Report of an Inspection in March 2019



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

Gran Tots Playgroup is accommodated in purpose-built premises with an adjoining outdoor area and is located off the main street in Swatragh. Since the last inspection, a new playgroup assistant has taken up post. The playgroup has introduced, for the current year, an additional afternoon class with a small number of pre-school children alongside children in their penultimate pre-school year. The playgroup is participating in the 'Getting Ready to Learn' programme funded by the Department of Education.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	20	27
Under 3 years of age	0	19
Funded by Department of Education	20	8
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4	#	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	28%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	92.43%
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

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-six of the parents and three of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were highly positive about all aspects of the provision. The additional written comments by parents highlighted the excellent, caring staff, the progress the children make in their learning and the very good range of information provided to enable them to help their child at home. The staff commented on the strong sense of team work and commitment among the whole staff team. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from the management committee.

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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are eager and enthusiastic, with high levels of sustained engagement in their learning. They are making very good progress across almost all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children make choices and manage the daily routines independently and they initiate and develop their own play in collaboration with one another. They are respectful to each other, the staff and their environment.
- Most of the children are very confident and express their ideas, ask questions and communicate effectively using a wide range of vocabulary. They understand and follow instructions, are very attentive when listening to stories and participate well with songs and rhymes. They have a high level of interest in books, label their own work, are beginning to understand that the written word has meaning and enjoy mark making with a purpose.
- The children sort, match, count and make comparisons of size and shape as a natural part of their play experiences and understand simple associated mathematical language. There is less evidence of regular interest in pattern making. They use a range of art materials to experiment with colour, make simple models and create representations of people and familiar objects in their environment.
- Many of the children spend sustained periods in imaginative role play as they initiate and act out roles as family members, farmers, builders or customers at the play shop. They have very good levels of interest in investigating the properties of water and sand and the natural environment as they grow seeds, care for plants, feed the birds and play with the farm.
- The children use the digital camera independently to record one another and experiment with the computer to explore letters, numbers and drawing. They use a range of tools with confidence as they, for example, butter their bread, cut vegetables or build a wall with real bricks in the outdoor sandpit. They run, throw and catch, balance, pedal and dig with very good co-ordination during outdoor play.
- The children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning are progressing well in their language skills, social skills and concentration with sensitive adult support and guidance.

6. Quality of provision

- The playroom and outdoor area are attractively presented with distinct, well-resourced areas of play. The materials are easily accessible supporting the children's independent choices and the recently upgraded story area is encouraging the children to enjoy books and use puppets to develop their language skills. The children need to have more regular planned opportunities to develop their problem solving and creative design skills and use a wide range of construction materials on a regular basis.
- The daily routine is managed very effectively to use all time for learning and ensure smooth transitions between different activities
- The high quality of the staff interactions to support and enhance the children's learning and development is a key strength of the pre-school. The staff have a calm, caring and sensitive approach to their sustained conversations with the children. They listen to, and build effectively on the children's ideas and extend their language and thinking through appropriate open-ended questions and modelling of key vocabulary.
- The staff plan a rich and varied pre-school programme with very good opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors in almost all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The staff implement the planned programme consistently and make regular evaluations of the children's' responses. The planned outings and an interesting range of visitors to the pre-school enhance further the children's learning experiences. The staff make regular and meaningful assessments of the children's learning to track their progress. This information is used to identify learning needs, communicate with parents and guide support for individual children.
- The staff provide an inclusive and caring ethos for the children identified with additional learning needs. They liaise closely with the parents and other health and educational professionals to provide appropriate support for the children. The recent training from the Education Authority special educational needs team is supporting and building the capacity of the staff to provide for these more specialist needs. The policy for special educational needs lacks sufficient detail and requires updating.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management have sustained high quality pre-school education in this playgroup over a prolonged period of time. The playgroup is led and managed effectively with all of the staff, and the very supportive committee, contributing to an effective team approach.
- The staff are reflective in their practice. They have identified relevant areas for further development and can demonstrate improvements in their areas of focus. These include, for example, the children's improved use of the story area, the involvement of parents in reading with their children and building the staff knowledge and expertise for meeting the needs of children with additional needs.

- The support and guidance of the early year's specialist and the cluster sessions provided by the Early Years Organisation are valued by the staff team. The staff are encouraged to reflect on and implement their training. The format and content of the written EYS reports do not indicate clearly enough for the staff, the link between the priorities for development, staff training and the evaluation of the progress being made within the setting.
- The very good links with the local primary school, to which most of the children transfer, help to build relationships among the children from the pre-school and older children from the school and contribute to a smooth transition.

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

Gran Tots Playgroup 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 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 management¹:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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