

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Greengables Playgroup,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
September 2017

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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1. Context

Greengables Playgroup is accommodated in a classroom within Central Primary School, Carrickfergus. The playgroup uses the school hall and an enclosed outdoor area for their outdoor physical play programme. The children are supervised by the staff as they use the toilet area which is located outside of the playroom.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	100%
Number of days open in previous school year	187

Source: data provided by the setting.

** 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

Six of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were highly positive about all aspects of the provision. The parents commented on their appreciation of the effective leadership, the very good communication between the playgroup and parents and the high level of care and learning their children receive. The staff responses indicated a strong commitment in providing quality pre-school education and referred to the good reputation of the playgroup built through relationship with parents and the local community.

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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children are making good progress in their learning as appropriate to the start of their pre-school year. A small number of children are not sufficiently focused on playing productively or participating fully in the tidy up routine and require further adult support to do so.
- Most of the children explore with increasing confidence and independence the range of play activities provided. They settle quickly to their play and co-operate very well with the daily snack routine. Small groups of children play collaboratively together to extend their play; their social skills are developing very well.
- There is a wide range of ability in language and communication skills among the children. The children with well-developed speech and language engage confidently in sustained conversations with the staff and each other during their play. The children are very interested in and responsive to rhymes, songs, books and stories both spontaneously during free play and during the adult-led larger group sessions. A small number of children are developing an awareness that print has meaning, and engage in early mark making both indoors and outdoors.
- The children confidently practice using their fine and gross motor skills with the range of equipment provided. A small number do not use the outdoor space and larger physical equipment effectively and require further guidance from the adults. A majority of children count, sort and match as a natural part of their play and when participating in relevant songs and rhymes.
- The children are beginning to use their imaginations to recreate familiar family roles in the home play and mud kitchen areas. They are at the early stage of experimenting and exploring the materials at the painting easel and the creative table, as appropriate for the time of year. They are beginning to solve problems as they fit together the pieces from a range of construction materials. A few children make early representational models. The children enjoy pouring and filling at the water tray for sustained periods. A majority of the children do not yet take time to observe closely or show curiosity and awareness of the world around them; they need more support to foster an ethos of discovery and investigation.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are well settled and integrated effectively into the group.

6. Quality of provision

- There is insufficient planning for progression in the use of resources and for learning outdoors. As a result the activities are not matched well enough to the time of year and the developmental stages of the children.
- The planned pre-school programme provides an interesting range of activities and experiences across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff need to develop further planning for progression in the use of resources and more detailed observations to match learning more fully to the needs of the children. The learning environment is well presented and enhanced with information for parents and displays of the children's own art work. The staff are making good progress in trialling and evaluating the best use of the new classroom, hall space and outdoor area. At times, the need for the adults to accompany children to the toilets in addition to staff supervising the hall area leads to less effective sustained interactions with the children in the playroom.

- A majority of the staff interaction to promote learning is of a good to very good quality. The staff listen to the children's ideas, support their independent choices, encourage turn taking, introduce new vocabulary and stimulate an interest in books, songs and rhymes. At times the staff do not place sufficient emphasise on establishing consistently with the children, their expectations of how to use equipment and play productively.
- Children who require additional support with their learning are identified early through information which is gathered from staff observations, parents and other professionals. The information is not utilised to best effect and needs to inform more effectively the planning of specific targets and actions to meet the children's needs.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader manages effectively the organisation of the playgroup. She is a good role model in her own work with the children and has established confidence in the pre-school provision among her staff, the parents and the wider community.
- The playgroup have developed and improved key aspects of their work in recent years. This includes in particular the development of links with the parents, main feeder primary schools and the local early year's partnership. The leader should re-establish links with the local Sure Start project and be informed about the services they provide. The leader, who has been her own early years specialist for several years, has identified the potential benefits of employing an early years specialist to contribute to her own professional development. While staff have participated in a range of relevant training, she has identified appropriately the need develop systematic processes for self-evaluation and action planning that focus clearly on improved outcomes for the children.
- The management group is well informed about the work of the playgroup through regular meetings with the leader. The committee would benefit from further training on how to develop their role.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. However, Greengables playgroup needs to ensure that the policies for managing behaviour, toileting and responding to an allegation against a member of staff are reviewed and updated to reflect the practice.

9. Overall effectiveness

Greengables Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all children.

There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are that:

- the staff need to develop further planning for progression in the use of resources;
- the observations and assessment information need to be used more consistently to inform the next steps in the children's learning; and
- the staff need to focus their action plans more fully on the curriculum and the outcomes for the children.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

APPENDIX A

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.

APPENDIX B

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 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 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.
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.
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.
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.

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