

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Helping Hands Pre-School  
Playgroup, Lambeg,  
County Antrim

Private Day Nursery

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## 1. Context

Helping Hands Pre-school Playgroup operates in a new modular building within Helping Hands Day Care in Lambeg, County Antrim. This is the first inspection of the playgroup which was established in 2015.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	9
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	9
With statement of special educational needs	0
With English as an additional language	0

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	90%
Number of days open in previous school year	195

**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

Just over half of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about almost all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The written comments commended the staff's care and attention in meeting the children's individual needs and the helpful quality of the communication between the staff and the parents.

## 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	Good
Leadership and management	Good

## **5. Outcomes for learners**

- The children are polite and engage confidently with the staff and visitors. They enjoy talking about their interests and achievements. Their play is mostly purposeful and concentrated for extended periods. For the time of year, most of the children's self-management skills are well-established; for example, they take responsibility for tidying up and for aspects of preparing the buffet snack. Most respond positively to their regular daily routines and the staff's expectations and access independently the equipment they need to extend their play. A minority would benefit from further progression and challenge in the planned activities to extend their learning outcomes further.
- The children engage productively in the activities provided indoors and outdoors; they create attractive representational artwork using a range of materials and are developing well their manipulative skills through using various tools and equipment. Most of the children browse and enjoy story and fact books and most are developing their understanding of some early mathematical concepts in meaningful contexts, including number, measures and shape. A majority show an interest in early mark-making and know they can communicate stories and information through writing.
- All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making good progress in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The assessments of the children's responses do not sufficiently inform the future planning to provide progression and challenge in the children's learning. The staff have appropriately identified the further development of the written planning as a key priority.
- The staff have developed an attractive, child-centred learning environment in the new playroom; the available space indoors is used effectively to progress the children's independence and self-management skills. The staff need to develop more fully the outdoor learning potential.
- The staff often take the lead from the children, making good use of spontaneous opportunities for the children to build their learning further. Their interactions promote frequently the children's thinking skills, curiosity and language development. The staff use a range of mathematical and scientific terms in meaningful contexts and prompt the children to explore and explain new words and ideas as they arise naturally during play.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack for the children and an appropriate period for energetic physical play.
- The staff monitor and support the children's individual needs sensitively and as a result, all of the children are included fully in the various activities.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the children's learning and well-being. The staff value and encourage the children's efforts and suggestions within a relaxed and positive learning environment.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Since the playgroup opened in 2015, the staff have identified appropriate initial priorities; the recent action plans have brought about a range of important improvements. Overall, the processes for self-evaluation and development planning within the playgroup need to be embedded further. In particular, the staff need to refine how they evaluate the impact of the improvement work on the quality of the provision and the standards which the children attain.
- The dedicated and experienced leadership and management team has, however, a practical, collaborative approach to their work; the team is clearly focused on bringing about continuous improvement in all aspects of the provision to benefit the children's learning and all-round development.
- There are effective links and helpful communication with the parents who are supportive of the playgroup's work. Good use is made of visitors to the playgroup to enrich the children's learning.

## **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**

Helping Hands Pre-school Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address; to develop further the quality and consistency of the planning at all levels and to develop more fully the outdoor learning potential.

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 proprietor, manager and playroom leader; 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 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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