

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

High Kirk Community Playgroup,
Ballymena, County Antrim

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
March 2017



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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

High Kirk Community Playgroup operates within the premises of High Kirk Presbyterian Church Hall on Thomas Street, Ballymena. Since the last inspection, while the same staff team has remained in place, the management committee has changed.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	22
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	15
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	96%
Number of days open in previous school year	187

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.

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirty two percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of responses were highly positive. In their written comments, the parents emphasised the playgroup's nurturing and child-centred ethos, the professional and approachable staff and the detailed, helpful quality of the information they received. The Education and Training Inspectorate shared with the leader and the chair of the management committee the responses to the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are very well-settled and have excellent levels of independence; they select from and manage the well-presented resources and equipment with ease. They play for sustained periods with high levels of interest and engage openly and confidently with the staff and visitors. The younger children are integrated well and access all aspects of the curriculum with skilful adult support. The children's personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength; they have a well-developed early understanding of working together and listening with interest to others.
- Overall, the children are making very good progress across the pre-school curriculum. They have an early understanding of number, know and can talk about a range of shapes and use some measurement language appropriately. The children engage with great interest in the story sessions; they can explain their needs and express their opinions confidently to one another and adults. A majority are ready to progress their early mark-making to the next stage and are interested in how print conveys information and stories. The children choose from an attractive and varied range of materials to produce artwork which is often detailed and individual. They take on and sustain a range of roles easily in the play areas and are developing very well their physical strength and range of movement skills.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff organise the playroom and resources effectively to ensure the children use all the space fully and become increasingly self-reliant. The children access easily very good authentic materials and equipment which engage them for lengthy periods and encourage their sense of enquiry.
- The planning is comprehensive and there is evidence of appropriate progression in the programme. The staff know the children and their individual needs well and make regular evaluations of the children's responses. The written records do not always link the assessments effectively to the planning and need to be streamlined to reflect more accurately the children's specific progress and needs.
- The learning conversations amongst the staff and the children are always good or better. The staff model positive social and play behaviours and often ask pertinent questions to challenge the children's thinking and develop their language skills.
- The high quality of care and welfare impacts positively on the outcomes for the children. The inclusive, caring ethos in which each child is valued builds the children's confidence and contributes to their well being and positive attitudes to learning.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the playgroup is effective, as evidenced by the consistently high quality pre-school education being provided. The collaborative leadership approach creates a successful team in which staff skills are valued and used to good effect.
- The staff's practical approach to self-evaluation helps them to identify appropriate priorities for improvement in the playgroup's provision. The development planning leads to improvement in the professional development of the staff and in the quality of the provision. The management committee is well-informed, highly committed to, and supportive of, the life and work of the playgroup.
- The positive relationships and effective communication with parents keeps them well informed about their children's progress and how to support their children's learning at home. The playgroup's various partnerships and visitors enhance the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

High Kirk Community 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.

Information on sessions and staff**Duration of sessions**

Part-time: am
9.10am -12.10pm

Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1

Number of: *	
Students	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.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 chairperson of 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

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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