

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Hillcrest Pre-school, Belfast

Private Day Nursery

Report of an inspection in
January 2017

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4

Appendices

- A. Information on sessions and staff
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Hillcrest Day Nursery is a privately operated childcare facility situated in South Belfast. The day nursery operates a pre-school playgroup which is accommodated in a self-contained building on the premises and has access to a large outdoor area. This is the first inspection of the setting.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	11
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	11
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
With English as an additional language	#
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	90.5
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirty-six per cent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses, from both parents and staff, were highly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In the small number of written comments, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the quality care and teaching provided by the staff and the good progress made by their children. The staff highlighted their enthusiasm and dedication to the continuous improvement of the quality of the provision to meet effectively the needs of each child.

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.

KEY FINDINGS

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children are settled and engage purposefully throughout the session. They are familiar with the routines of the pre-school and are confident in engaging with the adults and their peers. They access the resources they need independently and all are making good progress in managing aspects of their personal welfare, such as, changing into their coats, boots/shoes and waterproof clothing for outdoor play. They are making good progress in understanding the need to share resources; a small group were observed working well collaboratively.
- Those children who require support with aspects of their learning are integrated well within the group and make good progress to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Most of the children have very good language and communication skills; a small number enjoy browsing in books and are developing their book handling skills. Most of the children recognise their own names, can label their own work independently and show an interest in early mark-making. The children use early mathematical language naturally during their play, particularly that related to positional language and measures. Most of the children are developing well their fine motor skills; as observed in their confident use of a range of tools, such as, a tape holder, pencil sharpener and scissors. All of the children show a very good interest in the World Around Us and engaged very enthusiastically in outdoor play in the mud kitchen and herb garden areas. Within these activities, they demonstrate good investigation, observation and early problem-solving skills.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff make good use of all available space and provide a well-organised, welcoming environment with a range of natural and real resources to enhance the children's play. There is very good provision across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have identified the need to develop the provision for the arts during outdoor play. This area of the curriculum also needs to be developed further within the playroom as evidence of the children's use of, and interest in, representational drawing was limited during the inspection and there were missed opportunities to encourage these skills in a natural way.

- The adult interactions with the children are very good. A key strength is the staff's effective use of questioning to develop the children's thinking and problem-solving skills. They are consistent in their approaches to developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills; as a result the children are well-behaved and are becoming aware of their own emotions and those of others.
- The planning is comprehensive and identifies appropriately the role of the adult. The staff evaluate the planning and adapt it well to meet the interests of the children. They make use of an appropriate range of observations and assessments of the learning to inform future planning; but they do not use the information well enough to ensure effective progression and challenge, especially for the most able children, throughout their pre-school year.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, interaction and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a well-established leadership team within the day nursery and pre-school, who work together effectively to identify appropriate priorities for development and set high expectations for improving further the quality of the provision. The successful on-going development of the outdoor provision impacts positively on the children's learning.
- The pre-school staff receive very good quality support from their early years specialist, through the Early Years Organisation, for the development of their understanding and use of self-evaluation to promote improvement. An appropriate three year development plan is in place and the staff make good use of photographs and parental feedback to monitor and evaluate their progress. The staff have recently begun using self-reflection and audit tools to raise further the quality of their self-evaluation; it is too early to see the benefit of this good practice which needs to be built upon and embedded more thoroughly.
- There are good links with the parents. Where possible, they are encouraged to visit the setting and talk about their skills/jobs to enhance the children's learning. The parental newsletters provide good information about the life and work of the pre-school, outline the planned learning and advise the parents how they can support their children at home. The recent introduction of a communication 'App' provides the parents with regular online updates on their child's learning and play experiences.
- 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

Hillcrest Pre-school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There are areas for improvement that the pre-school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to develop further the use of self-reflection and audits to ensure high quality self-evaluation leading to improvement; and
- to develop strategies to ensure appropriate progression for all children, particularly the most able.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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

Part-time: am
9:00 – 11:30

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1

Number of: *	
Students	0
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

N/A not available

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 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 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 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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