

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Humpty Dumpty Playgroup,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
March 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Quantitative 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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	3
Appendices	

1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

The small numbers of responses to the confidential questionnaire by the parents were highly positive about the work of the staff and the good quality of the children's learning experiences. The staff responses to the questionnaire were also very positive about all aspects of the provision.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Humpty Dumpty Playgroup is accommodated in a purpose- built centre within the grounds of Downshire Primary School. It is situated in a residential area between Eden and Carrickfergus. The pre-school has changed its management type to a limited company by guarantee. Since the last inspection, a new leader has been in post from 2008. The outdoor area has been landscaped and resourced.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are making good to very good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They display very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning. The children make independent choices, manage confidently their daily routines, such as, their snack and can concentrate on tasks for sustained periods. Their social skills are well developed; they are respectful to the adults, helpful towards one another and negotiate and resolve their own differences during play.
- Most of the children have well developed language and communication skills. They talk readily about their activities, ask questions and recall information about their topic using a good range of vocabulary to express themselves. A significant number of children are interested in print and engage in experimental writing in the hairdresser role play area and at the large chalk board. They participate well in large and smaller group rhymes and songs and, when provided with the opportunity, enjoy informal group stories.
- A majority of the children use a broad range of mathematical language as an integral part of their play and daily routines to count, sort, match, explore patterns and make comparisons of size and quantity.
- The children play imaginatively as they act out roles such as being a builder, parent or hairdresser as a part of their play. The children have access to creative materials and are beginning to make representational drawings and experiment with colour and pattern; overall, their art work and the development of their creative ideas do not yet reflect their ability.
- The children are well motivated to use their senses, explore and investigate the very good range of natural materials incorporated into activities. They observe items closely and engage in sustained discussions about their discoveries.

6. Provision for learning

- The learning environment in the playroom and the outdoor play area is resourced and organised well to promote interest, independent choice and accessibility of materials by the children. The daily routine is well managed to promote learning and ensures smooth transitions between the distinct parts of the day.
- The staff promote settled and productive play and support effectively the children's own ideas. They extend frequently the children's language and thinking and engage in sustained conversations with them during their play.
- The long- and medium-term written planning is detailed and guides a broad and balanced pre-school programme that is developed over the year. The evaluations are detailed and well focused on the children's learning. These evaluations need to be used to inform more fully the learning intentions in the weekly planning and include more specific planning for the group sessions and the progressive development of music, rhyme and rhythm.

- Assessment information about the children's responses is recorded regularly; it is used to identify additional needs and provide useful information to parents and the staff. The systematic tracking of all aspects of the children's progress across the curriculum needs to be more consistent by all of the staff. The methods of record keeping and planning for children with additional needs are at an early stage of development. Training is being undertaken to build further the capacity of the staff regarding their knowledge and understanding of special educational needs.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. There is a supportive, respectful and inclusive ethos with good working relationships at all levels. The children are developing well an understanding of each other's feelings; their behaviour is very good.
- The children have a healthy, fruit break and talk readily about healthy eating; they have regular opportunities for energetic, physical play promoting a healthy lifestyle.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader and the staff work well together as a team and demonstrate a clear commitment to improvement and ongoing professional development. They have identified relevant priorities, have good consultation processes in place for the parents and the children and have made a useful start to the collation of evidence of their improvement journey. The early years specialist needs to support further the staff in the auditing and action-planning processes by identifying a clearer baseline position and linking clearly the improvement to the children's learning.
- The staff have good links with the local primary schools to which most of the children transfer and they liaise with relevant agencies when required. There is good communication with the parents through, for example, the informative newsletter and their pre-school questionnaire.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following area needs to be addressed:
 - the leader needs to receive training on the recruitment and vetting of staff.

8. Overall effectiveness

Humpty Dumpty Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement; in particular, the need to track consistently the children's achievements and link closely the action planning process to the development of the children's learning experiences.

Accommodation

1. There is very limited storage space for play equipment.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HUMPTY DUMPTY PRE-SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	23
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	23
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**	5
With English as an additional language	0
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	97%
Number of days open in previous school year	186

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9.00-12.00	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within the previous 12 months		0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

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