

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Jolly Tots Playgroup,
Mayobridge, County Down

Report of an inspection in
June 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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 playgroup:

The 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.
The playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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

A very small number of parents returned a confidential questionnaire; most of the responses were positive and highlighted the appropriateness of the planned programme of activities for the children. All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; the responses were wholly positive and highlighted the team approach to promoting the children's learning. The responses to the questionnaires have been shared with the leadership of the playgroup, including a representative of the management committee.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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

Jolly Tots Playgroup is a long established playgroup situated within the community centre in the village of Mayobridge, approximately six miles from Newry. The children attending the playgroup come from the village and the surrounding townlands.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well settled and on arrival engage quickly to sustained and purposeful play. They are very well behaved and are respectful of their peers, staff and visitors. The children are developing well their levels of independence, social skills and positive attitudes to learning.
- The children's early mark-making and letter formation is progressing well. They show an enthusiasm for books and enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Early mathematical concepts are developing well and the children are confident in using appropriate vocabulary associated with number, capacity, time and measure. The children's paintings, drawing and plans are detailed and the annotations by the staff reflect the children's imaginative thoughts and ideas about their work. The children are able to make choices about the resources they use in the creative arts area and are confident about mixing colours, choosing painting tools and selecting types of paper.
- The children respond enthusiastically to the opportunities in the indoor and outdoor play to explore and investigate the natural world. They are able to use a range of appropriate equipment to find and observe a variety of mini-beasts and demonstrate care and sensitivity towards living things. The children are confident when discussing and explaining their early scientific investigations for example, when testing the use of magnets on a range of materials.
- The children are developing well their fine motor skills as they use a range of tools and equipment in the playroom and outdoors. They engage enthusiastically in physical energetic play outdoors using the open spaces and the equipment available.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff have provided an attractive and well-organised learning environment which includes many interesting opportunities to extend the children's natural curiosity for discovery and investigation. The recent refurbishment of the outdoor play area provides further opportunities for exploration of the natural world, physical play, and imaginative role play in the workshop and the digging area. The use of natural resources and real equipment in many of the play activities provides a multi-sensory approach to learning and a familiarity with the real life contexts. The children's paintings and junk models are imaginatively displayed in the playroom and resources are organised for easy access by the children.
- The pastoral care is very good; the staff are very caring towards the children and their gentleness when working with the children creates a reassuring and relaxing environment. The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is of a consistently good to very good standard; a particular strength is the response of the staff to the children's spontaneous play. The daily routines are well established and used to promote further the children's learning.
- The staff plan together and have medium and short term plans across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The planning is not sufficiently well developed to ensure that all the activities, including the recently refurbished areas and additional new resources are fully exploited to extend the learning potential for the children, however, staff are making appropriate improvements. There are regular opportunities for the children to contribute to the planning process and they are able to suggest additional resources and activities based on their interests and ideas.

- The staff give very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity for example, the provision of a daily healthy snack and the involvement of the parents and children in a family initiative on healthy eating.

7. Leadership and management

- The majority of the staff have worked together for a considerable period of time and there are positive working relationships throughout the playgroup. The targets in the action plans related to identified areas for improvement are not specific enough, but the staff are making good progress and the actions taken are having a positive impact on the children's learning.
- The evaluation of the provision includes consultation with the staff, the parents and the children and this information is used to inform planning. The management committee is providing significant additional time in the new school year for the staff to continue with further development work in the playgroup.
- The parents are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through, for example the monthly newsletter and involvement in the management committee. There are established links with the local primary schools and the children benefit from visits to venues outside the playgroup and from visitors to the playgroup for example, the fire and medical services.
- The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation provides very effective, tailored support to develop the provision.
- The playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. There is a need to ensure that relevant child protection and safeguarding policies reflect current practices and procedures.

8. Overall effectiveness

Jolly Tots Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON JOLLY TOTS PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	26
Attending part-time	
Under 3 years of age*	
Funded by Department of Education	26
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**	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

* 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.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

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

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0	

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	1

*** Total placements since September of current year

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