

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Killyleagh Early Years
Playgroup, County Down

Report of an Inspection in
February 2016

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 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 small number of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaire. Overall, the responses indicated satisfaction with the quality of the provision. There were no returns to the confidential, parental questionnaire. The responses were shared with the staff and management group.

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

Since the last inspection, Killyleagh Early Years Playgroup has re-located and is now in a classroom within Killyleagh Primary School; a new leader has been appointed recently to the playgroup. On the day of the inspection, two permanent and one substitute member of staff were employed in the playgroup.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Requires urgent improvement
Provision for learning	Requires urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- While a small number of the children are settled and can produce work of an acceptable standard, a majority of the children have difficulty engaging in sustained and purposeful play. On occasions, the children's behaviour and their responses to the planned activities and routines, falls below the standard expected for the time of year. The staff need to review urgently their procedures for managing the children's behaviour and implement appropriate strategies to encourage more settled and productive play by the children.
- A significant minority of the children have poor speech and language skills and limited concentration. They have difficulty engaging in large group activities and group story sessions. The staff need to plan to meet more effectively the differing needs within the group.

6. Provision for learning

- While the staff plan a programme which includes all areas of the pre-school curriculum, they need to ensure that the planned activities provide adequate challenge for the children. Recently, the staff have purchased some additional resources to enhance aspects of the provision; further resources are required to ensure more variety and progression in the children's learning and development.
- The written planning is not sufficiently detailed to guide the staff effectively in their work with the children and, as a result, valuable learning and teaching opportunities are missed throughout the session.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children has important areas for improvement. The staff spend a significant amount of their time dealing with the inappropriate behaviour of the children and, as a result, often miss opportunities to extend the children's language and thinking skills.
- The staff have identified a small number of children with specific educational needs and have drawn up basic education plans. It will be important for the staff to access appropriate training, guidance and support to help them with this aspect of their work.
- While the staff are committed to the children in their care, there is a need to review key aspects of the provision in order to develop an environment conducive to high quality learning for all of the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup has recently experienced changes at both leadership and management level. While the current staff and management group have a shared vision for the future work and development of the playgroup they have reported to the inspectors that they do not feel they can manage the setting effectively without support. The new leader is at a very early stage in her own development and is inexperienced in management matters. In order to move forward the staff and the management group will require significant support in all aspects of their work.

- The early years specialist, from the Early Years Organisation, has worked hard with the management group to try to address the many difficulties within the playgroup. Moving forward, it will be essential that the early years specialist focuses on the children's learning and provides in-house support to build the capacity of the staff and management group to address the areas for improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

The following area needs to be addressed:

- while the staff training is up-to-date, the staff need to ensure that they are fully aware of how to implement the safeguarding policy and procedures.

8. Overall effectiveness

Killyleagh Early Years 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 need to:

- implement more effective behaviour management strategies to encourage more settled and productive play from the children;
- ensure the planning is sufficiently detailed to guide the staff effectively in all aspects of their work, in particular, to develop the children's language and communication skills; and
- improve the range of resources to provide greater variety, challenge and progression in all areas of the curriculum.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON KILLYLEAGH CROSS COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, KILLYLEAGH

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	24
Attending part-time	0
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	24
With statement of special educational needs	1
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	2
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	2
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	24

* 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.	
Number of days open in previous school year	

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
9.15 – 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		
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1	

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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