

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Kingdom Playgroup, Kilkeel, County Down

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No: 5AB-0231

Report of an Inspection in November 2019



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Kingdom Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation situated in Kilkeel, County Down. The children enrolled are from the surrounding rural area. There has been a change in leadership since the last inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	20
Funded by Department of Education	20

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	N/A
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	89
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

A significant minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were positive regarding the work and life of the playgroup. In written comments, the parents expressed their appreciation of the staff's care, attention and support for the children. The staff highlighted their motivation and aim to provide engaging activities which ensure progression for the children. A summary of the responses was shared with the leadership and management.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, 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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children settle quickly to purposeful play and their behaviour is very good. They self-register independently, manage their own snack and choose the resources they need to engage in extended periods of creative play.

- Most of the children display high levels of interest in the world around them and use their senses to explore and experiment, for example, when digging outside, planting real flowers in the sand tray and constructing detailed buildings from the wooden blocks.
- The children's language and communication skills are developing well. Most show an interest in books during play and at story time and they engage in good variety of mark-making opportunities within the creative activity areas. Their early representational drawings are of a good quality.
- Most of the children understand and use simple mathematical language associated with number and time, as a natural part of their play and daily routines; however, the children's understanding of mathematical relationships, size, measurement, shape and pattern is underdeveloped.

6. Quality of provision

- There are important areas for improvement within the quality of the provision. The short-term planning, although detailed, does not identify clearly enough the role of the adult in promoting learning. Consequently, the quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is variable. While the staff are always supportive and engage positively with the children to facilitate play, there are too many missed opportunities to develop the children's language and to extend their learning. The long-term planning reflects an appropriate range of themes which are linked to the children's interests.
- The staff record regular observations of the children's learning; however, there are insufficient observations in a number of curriculum areas and the observations do not record evidence of progression in the children's learning.
- The staff provide a well-considered and attractive learning environment for the children which includes a very good range of authentic and natural resources within the areas of play. The staff have begun to develop recently the outside learning provision which is enhancing the children's physical learning experiences. There is, however, a lack of breadth and balance to the planned outdoor programme, particularly in the area of the early mathematical development.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's care and welfare impact positively on the outcomes. The staff promote positive relationships throughout the setting. Their encouragement and positive reinforcement fosters the children's self-esteem and ensures everyone is valued as individuals.

7. Leadership and management

- There are important areas for improvement within the leadership and management. The staff team have a shared collegial approach; however, they have a limited understanding of the self-evaluation cycle which, as a result, is underdeveloped. The development plan has identified some appropriate areas for improvement and the associated action-planning guides the staff on the specific actions required to bring about improvements in the quality of provision. The staff do not use self-evaluation processes to measure and evaluate the impact of the improvement work undertaken.

- The management committee plays an active role in the life of the playgroup. The members, all of whom have a good range of expertise, have been allocated specific responsibilities relating to fundraising and the development of the provision. The recently appointed early years' specialist, from The Early Years Organisation, works well with the leadership to identify strengths and appropriate areas for development.
- There are very good links with the parents and the local community, and positive transition links with two local primary schools. The 'Big Bedtime Read' incorporated within the 'Getting Ready to Learn Strategy' from the Department of Education, is assisting in the promotion of effective home/playgroup links. This is further enhanced by a visits to local places of interest, including the local library.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

Kingdom Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop the quality of staff interactions with the children;
- make regular and more effective use of observations of the children's progress in learning across all areas of the curriculum and use these to inform future planning; and
- develop a robust process of self-evaluation and action planning leading to improvement in the quality of provision for the children.

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 in 12 to 18 months.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.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 chair 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

Quantitative terms

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 management¹:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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