

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kirkinriola Early Years,
Ballymena, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

Kirkinriola Early Years operates in mobile accommodation in the grounds of Kirkinriola Primary School, just outside the town of Ballymena. The children attend from the local and wider surrounding rural area as well as from the town. Sixteen of the 21 children currently enrolled are in their pre-school year. A new member of staff was appointed in 2017.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	16
Under 3 years of age*	6
Funded by Department of Education	16
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
With English as an additional language	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	94%
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and a majority of staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about almost all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The questionnaire responses were shared with the staff and the directors.

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	Good
Leadership and management	Important area for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are well-settled and mannerly; they treat one another, the adults and their play resources with respect; the very good development of the children's personal, social and emotional wellbeing is a particular strength in the playgroup.
- The children play purposefully and co-operate freely most of the time; the level of social interaction and engagement between the children is developing well. The routines of the playgroup, whilst providing support for the children, do not always offer sufficient opportunity for the children to develop their self-reliance.
- The children produce attractive artwork using a range of materials and a majority of them are developing an interest in early mark-making. They enjoy stories and action rhymes and understand some early mathematical concepts, including number, measures and shape in meaningful contexts.
- All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making good progress in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum. For a minority of the children, the planned activities do not provide sufficient progression and challenge to extend their learning outcomes.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide an attractive and well-resourced learning environment; the space indoors is organised well to encourage the children to access all areas and to celebrate the children's work in colourful displays.
- Overall, the staff interactions promote well the children's language development. They often make good use of spontaneous opportunities for the children to build their learning further. The staff need to use early mathematical and scientific terms more frequently in meaningful contexts, including within the children's regular routines.
- The children are not provided with sufficient regular opportunities to investigate and problem-solve to support them in developing their early reasoning skills and perseverance. On occasions, the staff do not give the children enough thinking time to try out their ideas and work out their own solutions.
- The current planning and monthly evaluations provide good general guidance for the children's programme for learning. The staff's written observations and assessments are mostly relevant and of a good quality. More use should be made of the assessments to inform the future planning and match more closely the children's individual needs, including those of the small number of children in their penultimate school year who attend on a part-time basis.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack for the children and regular physical play.
- The staff monitor and support the children in accordance with their individual needs and, as a result, all of the children are included fully in the activities.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the children's learning and their all-round development. The staff praise and encourage the children within a positive learning environment.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader and staff have identified a number of appropriate priorities for development; however, the action plans do not contain sufficient detail to guide and measure the impact of the improvement work on the quality of the provision and the standards the children attain. The leader, staff team and directors have focused recently on improving the learning environment to benefit the children's all-round development with good success. The leader and directors acknowledge the need to improve the processes for self-evaluation and development planning within the playgroup. The directors report that relevant, recent training has increased their understanding of how best to support the development work.
- There are supportive links and positive communication with the parents who value the playgroup's well-established community and family ethos. The effective working partnership between the playgroup and the adjacent primary school and the good use made of visitors enrich and extend the children's learning.

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

Kirkinriola Early Years needs to address important areas for improvement which include the need:

- to use the staff's observations and assessments more systematically to inform the planning for learning; and
- for the leadership and management to develop further the use of self-evaluation and development planning to bring about further improvement.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12-18 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 playgroup directors; 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 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 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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