

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ladybirds Playgroup, Gracehill,
Ballymena, County Antrim

Private Day Nursery

Report of an Inspection in
June 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Ladybirds Playgroup operates in purpose-built premises within Ladybirds Daycare in Gracehill, Ballymena. The playgroup opened in 2014 and was first inspected in 2015. The playgroup leader is also the proprietor.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	26	15
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	26	15
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	92%
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

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirty-nine percent of the parents and half of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The written comments highlighted the staff's care and attention in meeting the children's individual needs, the broad and stimulating range of learning experiences provided and the helpful, informative communication between the staff and the parents. A summary of the responses was shared with the leader/proprietor.

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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are attaining very high standards and making continuous progress across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. They interact openly and politely with the staff and visitors; talking confidently and knowledgeably about their interests and achievements. The children play with high levels of interest in their self-chosen activities, concentrating and collaborating for extended periods.
- The children's self-management skills and independence are very well-established; they respond enthusiastically to the staff's high expectations and access freely the resources they need to try out and investigate their ideas and extend their play. The progression and challenge in the planned activities and resources develop the children's disposition to learn, particularly their self-reliance and curiosity about the world around them. For example, supported skilfully by the staff, they persevere in interesting and meaningful early scientific investigations, including exploring the speed and distance travelled by small vehicles on a variety of ramps and the different properties of slime at the dough table. The children make relevant observations and ask probing questions which extend their thinking and topic vocabulary in the context of their play.
- The children engage productively in the stimulating activities provided indoors and outdoors; they create attractive representational artwork using a range of materials and are developing well their motor skills using increasingly challenging tools and equipment. They listen attentively to stories and browse and enjoy books independently. The children are developing a secure understanding of early mathematical concepts in meaningful contexts, including number, measures, shape and space and patterns. A majority are progressing well their early mark-making, including labelling and annotating their pictures and most know that stories and the information they need are communicated through writing and symbols.
- All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making excellent progress in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- The setting is very well-organised and richly resourced to capture the children's interest, foster their independence and celebrate their achievements. The staff have developed an engaging, child-centred learning environment in the playroom; the available space outdoors is used effectively to progress the children's physical development and energetic play.
- The staff have a well-developed understanding of the learning to be promoted through the play and regular routines and are very skilled in supporting the children to make further progress. They listen carefully to and take their lead from the children; making frequent use of spontaneous opportunities for the children to extend their learning. The staff interactions promote consistently the children's problem-solving and language development. They use a range of mathematical and scientific terms in meaningful contexts, prompting the children to explore and explain new words and ideas as they arise naturally during play.

- The pre-school programme is varied and engaging. The written planning guides the staff very well in their work with the children; there is clear progression and continuity across the learning areas throughout the year, as well as the flexibility for the staff to be responsive to the children's evolving interests and ideas. The staff know the children very well and use effectively the information from their interactions with the children, along with their observations, to inform the future learning and meet the children's individual needs.
- The staff monitor and support the children sensitively and as a result, all of the children are included fully in the various activities. Effective procedures are in place to inform the parents about their children's progress and development and to showcase the children's many achievements.
- 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, well-being and outcomes. The staff value and encourage the children's efforts and suggestions within a highly positive learning environment.

7. Leadership and management

- The outstanding leadership and management of the playgroup promotes effective teamwork and provides high quality care and education. The skilful staff team combine their complementary skills to very good effect in all areas of the life and work of the playgroup.
- Since the playgroup opened in 2014, the leader and staff have identified appropriate strategic priorities; the well-embedded approaches to self-evaluation and the staff's shared reflections lead to continuous improvement in all areas of the playgroup's provision in the best interests of the children.
- The playgroup has established excellent links with the parents, relevant agencies, feeder primary schools and the local community for the benefit of the children. The use of various visitors to the playgroup is particularly effective in enriching the children's learning.
- The playgroup employs an independent early years specialist to support its work; the positive and productive working relationships contribute to improving continuously the provision for the children.

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

Ladybirds 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.

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 leader/ proprietor and the independent early years specialist; 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2018

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk