

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Laurencetown Pre-school Playgroup, Laurencetown,
County Armagh

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No: 5AB-0234

Report of an Inspection in February 2020

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1. Context

Laurencetown Pre-school Playgroup is located within the community centre in Laurencetown village, County Armagh. The pre-school operates one part-time class of pre-school age children drawn from Laurencetown and the surrounding area. The pre-school also operates one part-time class of underage children every Monday and Tuesday afternoon. There have been no changes in staffing since the last inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	23	13
Funded by Department of Education	23	0
With English as an additional language	#	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	97
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the pre-school. The parents' written comments praised: the warm and caring staff who have the children's best interests at the forefront of their work; the wide range of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors; and the children's enjoyment of and progress in learning.

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	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children settle immediately to sustained and concentrated play, planning their play with their peers and staff and talking enthusiastically about their activities. The children have high levels of respect for the staff and each other. They know and understand the routines very well and display high levels of resilience, independence and self-management in all play areas.

- The children's language development and curiosity of the world around them are key strengths. The children ask the staff relevant questions to extend their language and understanding as, for example: they explore the slime in the water tray; examine the mini-beasts in the sand tray; and, collect worms and snails outdoors. They have a good understanding of their local community through frequent trips to local places of interest and regular planned activity mornings with senior citizens in the community centre. All of the children enjoy books; they refer to books at the dough table and home corner, peruse books in the library van and talk about their favourite stories. All of the children listen attentively at story time, predict what will happen next and talk about the illustrations. Most of the children experiment with mark-making at the writing table, the creative area and the sand tray.
- All of the children are developing a very good awareness of parts of their body, how they move, and how exercise helps them to think. They have a very good understanding of and can respond to positional language and their spatial awareness is very good. Outdoors, the children slide, pedal, climb and dig. They use a wide range of tools confidently, displaying very good fine motor skills.
- The children have a very good understanding of early mathematical concepts, such as, number, time, measure, shape and space and use mathematical language as a natural part of their play.
- The wide range of stimulating materials throughout the play room are used very well by the children to promote their imaginative and creative ideas. They create pictures and 3-D models and present puppet shows in the recently developed cosy area.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a play programme which is developed by the children for the children. The children's voice is central to the short-term planning process where the children inform the staff, on a weekly basis, of their preferred resources for each of the play areas. Consequently, the staff plan collegially a programme which reflects the children's interests and choices. They have a clear understanding of how to progress the children's language and learning using the children's ideas. The provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development, language development and world around us are particular strengths of the provision. The staff have identified appropriately the need to enhance further the outdoor provision.
- All staff are skilful in their interactions with the children. They introduce new language, use open-ended questions and provide support to the children where needed, which promotes very well the children's language development, problem-solving and thinking skills. The staff make regular, detailed observations of the children's learning to record clearly their progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and use these appropriately to inform next steps in the children's learning.

- The learning environment is resourced with an extensive range of authentic, recyclable and natural resources, which are organised thoughtfully to promote the children's independence and curiosity. Visual prompts and cues are used very well to support the children with the various routines. The children's creative work is celebrated through the many attractive wall displays.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. Through consultation with the children and parents, the staff have reviewed their approach to positive behaviour management. As a consequence, the behaviour of the children and the relationships at all levels are excellent.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work very well as a team with clear roles and responsibilities. They value the support from the Independent Early Years' Specialist who provides very good guidance to the group which is listened to and acted upon by the staff team. Together, they have identified appropriate areas for continued improvement which are outlined in the well-constructed development plan and supporting action plans. Self-evaluation is well-embedded and systematic; there is clear evidence of the impact of recent improvement work through, for example, recent improvements in the learning environment.
- The management committee are knowledgeable, supportive and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Committee members have been proactive in securing funding to enhance further the outdoor area and extend the intergenerational project with the community centre. They have identified appropriately the need to access training opportunities to develop further in their roles.
- The pre-school has very good links with parents who are kept well-informed about the progress of their children through, for example, the regularly updated photographs and children's comments about their learning in the entrance area.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. However, Laurencetown Pre-school Playgroup needs to: update the intimate care policy to reflect the practice of the setting.

9. Overall effectiveness

Laurencetown Pre-school 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 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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