

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lavey Early Years' Group,
County Derry

Report of an Inspection in
June 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ 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 nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / 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 nursery school's / 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.

All of the staff responded to the questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive about the life and work of the playgroup and the effective leadership of the leader. All of the findings from the questionnaires were shared and discussed with the representatives from the management group and the staff.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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

Lavey Early Years' Group is accommodated in parochial-owned premises in the parish of Lavey, County Derry. There are currently 25 pre-school children attending the session. All of the staff have been in place since the time of the last inspection in 2009.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children are very well settled and sustain purposeful play of a collaborative and solitary nature. They display high levels of independence and self-management, as they: initiate and plan their own play; access resources of their own choice and return them when they are finished with them; and, serve their own food and drink at break and tidy away their dishes.
- Almost all of the children are developing appropriate language and communication skills and are confident to talk about their play with each other and with adults. They engage enthusiastically in independent writing and mark making, both indoors and outdoors, and their early writing skills and representational artwork are of a very high standard.
- The children are developing very well their understanding of key mathematical concepts and associated language, particularly in measures, shape and early number, through a range of stimulating, well-resourced and meaningful play opportunities indoors and outdoors.
- The children's fine motor skills are well developed as they engage in a range of activities, including threading, moulding, creative artwork and early writing activities. They are confident to explore and experiment with the range of natural materials and tools available to them, both indoors and outdoors, and select independently the resources that they require for play.
- The children engage enthusiastically in energetic play in the outdoor area and are developing well their running, jumping, throwing, catching and games skills. They also display an awareness of their own personal safety in the outdoor area and a very good understanding of turn-taking.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff have created a stimulating, attractive and well-resourced learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The learning environment is laid out into distinct areas for learning in line with the High Scope¹ methodology, and the ease of access to the resources provides very good opportunities for the children to develop their creativity, independence, self-management and problem-solving skills.
- The daily routine is very well embedded and the timetable provides an appropriate balance between free play and the more adult-led activities. The snack routine and all transitions between the activities are developed very effectively, often through the use of song, and provide very good learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is of a consistently high standard. The staff extend further the children's thinking skills and vocabulary through: modelling skilfully key language; effective questioning; and, encouraging the children to plan for and reflect on their own play.

¹ www.highscope.org

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The staff treat the children and each other with care and respect and have created an inclusive and supportive environment in which every child has an opportunity to thrive.
- The pre-school programme is very well balanced and provides very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The system in place for observations, recording and planning, is well-embedded, meets very well the needs of all the children and ensures progression and consistency in the quality of provision and the learning experiences of the children.
- The provision for special educational needs is outstanding. There are appropriate individual education plans in place which are reviewed and updated regularly and guide the staff well in meeting the specific needs of all the children. There are very effective links with parents and other professionals and an ongoing commitment from the staff to their own continual professional development in order to meet the individual needs of the children.
- The playgroup gives outstanding attention to healthy eating and physical activity, through: the provision of healthy breaks; regular reference and access to healthy food, through various play areas; and, the extensive range of opportunities for the children to engage in energetic, physical play.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a highly effective team ethos within the playgroup and a culture of collegiality at all levels. The leader is a reflective practitioner and an excellent role model; she is supported very well by her staff in all areas of the life and work of the playgroup. There is a culture self-evaluation, which is supported effectively by photographic evidence, and there is evidence of the impact that this has had on various aspects of the playgroup's provision. The leader has identified the scope to enhance further the process of development planning and in particular the action planning process.
- There are very effective links with the parents and they are kept informed about their child's progress and the life and work of the playgroup through: regular meetings; informative monthly newsletters; parental workshops; and, through their involvement in a range of fundraising events.
- The early years' specialist from the Early Years Organisation has made a very good contribution to the overall development of the provision in this playgroup.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

Lavey Early Years' Group 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.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON LAVEY EARLY YEARS' GROUP, COUNTY DERRY

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	25
Under 3 years of age*	
Funded by Department of Education	25
With statement of special educational needs	
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	***
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	
With English as an additional language	
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	

* 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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	92%
Number of days open in previous school year	184

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	2.5 hours	

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		5
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within the previous 12 months		

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

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