

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Diamonds Playgroup,
Claudy, County Londonderry

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
March 2017



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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Little Diamonds Playgroup is located within the Diamond Centre in Claudy. The facilities are self-contained within the centre and include a well-resourced outdoor play area. The children attending the playgroup come from the local area. Although the centre is registered for twenty children only ten are enrolled this current academic year.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	10
Funded by Department of Education	10
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	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	50
Average attendance for the previous year.	80%
Number of days open in previous school year	188

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

One third of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were positive.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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	Very good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are well settled, familiar with the daily routines and have good levels of independence. They approach the staff readily and are confident when talking about their play and sharing their personal experiences.
- The children work well with each other and can engage in sustained and purposeful play. They use independently, the available creative materials to make detailed representations of the world as they see it. In imaginative role-play the children use the available resources very well to act out real-life scenarios that build on their own personal experiences and learning.
- Most of the children have good speech and oral language skills; they listen attentively to stories, join in songs and rhymes and can follow basic instructions. The children with specific needs participate well in activities and the staff report that they are making steady progress.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have invested in a wide range of good quality resources which the children have access to throughout the day. However, in some of the play areas too many resources are provided at one time and the wall displays are covered with too many samples of the children's work, photographic evidence of activities and a variety of information: as a result the environment is over-stimulating for the children.
- The weekly plans do not guide consistently the key learning and teaching nor take enough account of the children's individual needs or interests. While there is a substantial amount of observation of the children's involvement in play the information is not used effectively to assess the children's progress and therefore does not inform sufficiently the short-term planning.
- The staff are caring and supportive in their interactions with the children and, during the inspection, built appropriately on their responses during play and routines.
- The daily timetable provides a good balance between free play and organised routines such as snack and story time.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children does not, through the planning for learning and teaching and the system of record keeping, meet effectively enough the individual needs of children.

7. Leadership and management

- The learning environment and associated documentation is not of a sufficiently high standard. The staff and the management group need to work together to improve planning, assessment and provision, in order to ensure consistently higher standards of pre-school education for all of the children, across all aspects of the work of the playgroup.

- The process of self-evaluation is underdeveloped and lacks sufficient evidence to support the current priorities identified in the development plan.
- The centre employs the services of an early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation to support the staff in their work. Due to circumstances, there was a break in continuity of support over the current year. Over time, the support has not been effective in bringing about the necessary changes. The areas for improvement identified in this report remain an important priority for tailored support and development.
- The staff have developed valuable links with the parents and the main feeder primary school to which the children will attend.
- Valuable information on safeguarding for parents is not sufficiently evident in displays, however, based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Little Diamonds Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the children.

The areas for improvement are to:

- review aspects of the record-keeping to ensure evaluative assessments of the children's progress are carried out regularly and the information is used appropriately to inform the short-term planning; and
- ensure that the learning environment and all necessary documentation is of the high standard required in order to support more effectively the aspects of learning, teaching and management evaluated in this report.

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.

Information on sessions and staff**Duration of sessions**

Part-time: am
9.15-11.45

Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2

Number of: *	
Students	1

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework*.

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

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 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 the 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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