

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Doves Childcare Centre,
Newtownards, County Down

Report of an inspection in
November 2015

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

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 continue to 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 continue to 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 discussion with the staff;
- 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.

Twelve parents and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the centre. In particular, the parents highlighted the friendly and helpful staff and their appreciation of the valuable parent workshops to help them to support their children at home. The staff responses were wholly positive. The ETI has reported to the leader and a representative of the management committee the main messages emerging from the questionnaires.

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;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Little Doves Childcare Centre is accommodated in a purpose-built modular building adjacent to the West Winds Community Centre in Newtownards. The centre has its own outdoor play and garden areas. Three members of staff have been appointed since the last inspection. The centre is developing its provision for shared education through fostering good relations among the parents and local community.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and almost all of them engage purposefully throughout the session. They are confident in approaching adults for support and share their achievements in their play with an obvious pride. Small numbers of the children are beginning to engage in collaborative play in the construction and imaginative play areas and are participating in group games outdoors. The children are becoming confident in the routines of the centre and, with growing independence, access the resources they require, look after their own work and put on their coats.
- The children listen well to the group story and join in the refrains and rhymes enthusiastically. Small numbers of the children are beginning to show an interest in books and in early mark-making. The children's paintings and representational drawings are well-displayed alongside their comments on their work.
- During the inspection, the children showed enthusiasm for creative activities and used a range of methods and tools to experiment including a tape holder, stapler and paper punch. They showed an interest in early mathematical activities; using scales for weighing, counting opportunities and number, and a growing understanding of positional language and size comparisons.

6. Provision for learning

- Very good use is made of all available space in the bright, well-resourced playroom. The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently high quality. Through effective questioning they encourage the children to problem-solve, extend their vocabulary and, where necessary, scaffold and model language for them. The staff are consistent in their use of positive behaviour strategies and praise and the children respond very well to these approaches, resulting in a calm, nurturing and supportive learning environment.
- The recent development of the systems for monthly planning and for observing and assessing the children's learning, have impacted positively on both the quality of the provision and the staff's understanding of the planned learning opportunities. The staff make regular and appropriate observations of the children and assessments of their learning which, combined with the children's interests, are used effectively to plan a programme which meets well the needs of all children.

- The broad and balanced programme presents very good opportunities for learning across the majority of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the provision and planning for outdoor play. The recent addition of a mini-beast area, which was built by the local community environment group, has added greatly to the outdoor provision and enhanced the children's interest and engagement in the World Around Us area of the pre-school curriculum.
- The provision for the children identified with additional learning needs is of a very good quality. The staff make very effective use of their recent training, through the Early Years Inclusion Project, to implement behavioural strategies and provide additional support for the children. There are very good links with outside agencies which provide the staff and parents with additional support and advice.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the centre is outstanding. There are high levels of inclusion and a genuine ethos of family and community within the centre. The staff treat the children with care and respect and there are very good working relationships between the staff, the children and their families.
- The centre gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the healthy break, dental hygiene routine and the good opportunities for energetic physical activity, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a collaborative team approach for all staff, with clearly defined roles for both the centre manager and the playgroup leader, which complement and support each other well. The staff and management committee are completely dedicated to supporting both the community and the parents, in providing the highest quality provision and the best possible start for the children in their care.
- The strategic development plan is of a very high quality and the leadership make very good use of self-evaluation to promote on-going improvement within the provision and the standards achieved by the children. The monthly evaluations of the provision include the responses of the children, the staff and the parents along with plans for future learning goals and the extension of the children's learning. The centre has received very good support and guidance from their independent Early Years Specialist in developing the quality of the provision and the use of self-evaluation.
- There are excellent links with the parents and the local community which greatly enhance the provision. The centre has well-established links with the nursery unit of the nearby primary school and the local Surestart setting. Through these links a programme of parental workshops has been put in place to support the parents in working with their children and provide opportunities for additional educational opportunities for them.
- The centre has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

The centre has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the centre sustains improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON LITTLE DOVES CHILDCARE CENTRE

1. Details of children

Number of children:	
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	26
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	26
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	3
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3
With English as an additional language	2
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

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

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	

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		0
New appointments within the previous 12 months		1

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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