

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Friends Private Day Care,
Banbridge, County Down

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
May 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 Friends Playgroup is located in Little Friends Private Day Care on Huntley Road near the town centre of Banbridge. The playgroup operates two part-time funded sessions. All members of staff are newly appointed to the pre-school department since the previous inspection in 2010.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	23	18
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	23	18
With statement of special educational needs	#	0
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**	#	0
With English as an additional language	0	0
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	95.6%
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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-two percent of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. In written comments, the parents highlighted: the nurturing and friendly pre-school environment; the very good communication between the staff and parents; and, the provision of a wide range of enjoyable learning experiences for the children. All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the pre-school.

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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children, including those with special educational needs, are well-settled. Most of the children display very good levels of independence, selecting resources and engaging in co-operative play with their peers. Overall, the children are developing very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning.
- The children are confident in their engagement with each other and with adults. Almost all of the children recognise their own name and label their work. During story time, the children listen attentively and a significant minority were observed referring to books during play. The representational drawings by the children are of a very good quality.
- Throughout the play session, the children display a very good understanding of early number, participating in counting games, matching, sorting, exploring shape and using the language of comparison when measuring. A particular strength is the children's interest in and exploration of the world around them. They show respect and responsibility for their environment, tending to plants and flowers, and investigating the well-designed and attractive outdoor learning area.

6. Quality of provision

- Staff provide a play programme that has very good opportunities across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum. High priority is given to developing the children's language and literacy skills through the provision of a language-rich learning environment where the children's work is displayed attractively and annotated with the children's thoughts and ideas. The playrooms and outdoor area are well-resourced with a wide range of authentic materials which are of interest to the children.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is consistently good and, on occasions, very good and outstanding. The staff respond to the children's interests and needs and, in the best practice, use open-ended questions to promote learning and extend thinking.
- The recently reviewed planning is comprehensive, informed by a rigorous system of observation and assessment of the children's learning, and is highly effective. The planning indicates progression and challenge in the children's learning.

- The provision for children who have additional needs is outstanding. The staff use a wide range of strategies to support the children in their learning. Individual education plans are well-constructed, linked closely to the observations of the children, and show clear evidence of the children making appropriate progress in their learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The consistent approach to positive behaviour management, coupled with the very positive working relationships between the staff and the children, results in a welcoming and inclusive ethos.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff are conscientious, highly reflective and work very well as a team. A child-centred approach permeates the playgroup where all staff take responsibility and are accountable for all children in their care. As a result, the children have access to a high quality learning experience.
- The staff value and benefit from regular and very good support provided by the early years specialist which has enabled the staff to improve further the provision.
- Self-evaluation underpins the staff's actions. The development plan is meticulously detailed and outlines appropriate areas for improvement. Recent improvement work undertaken by the staff has resulted in an improved planning process which links closely the provision to the developmental needs of the children. Staff development is at the centre of the improvement process where staff research, implement and evaluate different approaches to learning to improve the provision for and outcomes of the children.
- There are purposeful links with the parents through newsletters, information sessions and interviews. The staff value links with local primary schools. Recent consultation with teachers has resulted in a review of transition information to support more effectively the children's transfer to primary education. There are well-established links with a wide range of external agencies for the benefit of the children's emotional, physical and academic development.
- 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 Friends 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.

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

Full-time	Part-time: am
	9.00 - 12 midday

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	7
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	7
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	2

Number of: *	
Students	0
Trainees	0

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 outcomes, 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, on quality of provision 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 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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