

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Little Gems Day Nursery, Dundonald, Belfast

Private Day Nursery DE Ref No: 4CA-0611

Report of an Inspection in October 2019



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Little Gems Day Nursery, Dundonald, is one of seven settings in the Clear Day Nursery chain. The nursery provides two pre-school rooms. There have been a number of changes in leadership and staffing since the last inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	20	20
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	20	19
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year	90
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

Just over ten per cent of the parents replied to the confidential questionnaire; they indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the pre-school's educational and pastoral provision. In particular, the parents praised the friendly and caring staff who have created an attractive and nurturing learning environment for the children and the staff's thoughtful inclusion and support for children who require further individual assistance. All of the staff responded to the questionnaire; their responses and written comments indicated an appreciation of all aspects of the teamwork in the setting and the frequent opportunities for continuing professional development. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the nursery managers and the staff team.

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	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are happy and well-settled. They speak and listen confidently with one another, the staff and visitors, talking enthusiastically about their learning and interests. The children play with high levels of interest in their self-chosen activities, concentrating and collaborating for extended periods.
- The children's personal, social and emotional development is a key strength; their independence and self-management skills are very well established for the time of year. The progression and challenge in the planned activities and resources develop the children's disposition to learn; particularly their resilience. For example, they wipe up their spills independently using resources from the spill centre and, supported skilfully by the staff, they develop their fine motor skills persevering in using real hammers to beat golf tees into pumpkins. The children ask relevant questions which extend their thinking and topic vocabulary in the context of their play and they negotiate sensitively with one another in relation to sharing their resources.
- The children engage productively and creatively in the stimulating activities provided indoors and outdoors; for the time of year they produce well-developed representational artwork using a range of materials and extend their collaborative role play in imaginative ways. They listen attentively to stories, browse and enjoy books independently and participate confidently in action songs with the staff. All of the children respond independently to the helpful prompts and labels in the setting and a significant minority are developing well their early mark-making. The children are developing a very secure understanding of early mathematical concepts in meaningful contexts, including number, measures, shape and space and patterns and they are curious to investigate the natural and man-made world around them.
- All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making excellent continuous progress across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide an engaging, child-centred learning environment in the playrooms; the available space outdoors is used effectively to progress the children's interests and creativity as well as their physical development and energetic play.
- The staff have a well-developed understanding of the learning to be promoted through the play and regular routines. The staff's interactions extend the children's vocabulary and language development and there are frequent examples of the staff using well spontaneous opportunities to increase the children's learning. They use early mathematical and scientific terms in meaningful contexts as they arise naturally during play, helping the children to explore new ideas and words.

- The staff know the children very well and use effectively the information from their interactions with the children, along with their observations of the children's learning, to inform the future planning and meet the children's individual needs. The pre-school programme provides an excellent balance of free play and time outdoors with more structured activities. The written planning contains clear progression and continuity across the learning areas throughout the year with the staff also adapting the programme to reflect more closely the children's evolving interests and ideas.
- The staff's approaches to meeting individual children's support needs are highly effective. The key workers monitor and support the children sensitively and as a result, all of the children are included fully in the various activities. There are very detailed records of the staff's regular communication with the parents to bring about continuous progress in the children's development and to share the children's achievements.
- 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 the children's outcomes. The staff take close account of and reflect thoughtfully on the children's individual needs and interests to adapt and extend the approaches they take and resources they provide.

7. Leadership and management

- The outstanding leadership and management of the pre-school promotes effective teamwork and deploys the complimentary skills and interests of the staff to very good effect to provide the children with high quality care and education.
- The leadership and staff have identified appropriate strategic priorities. Clear Day Nurseries employ an in-house early years specialist to support the work of all their pre-school settings; the positive and strategic working partnership focuses on improving continuously the provision for the children. The thoughtful and systematic approach to self-evaluation and the staff commitment to regular professional development has impacted positively and led to continuous improvement in all areas of the pre-school's provision.
- The pre-school has established many excellent links with the parents, relevant agencies, feeder primary schools and the local community which directly benefit of the children. For example, the intergenerational work with the local nursing home is particularly effective in enriching the children's learning and contributing to the well-being of others.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

Little Gems Day Nursery has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI will monitor how the nursery 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:

- meetings with those involved with leadership and management, including the operations manager, the nursery manager, the pre-school manager and the playroom leaders and staff teams and the in-house early years specialist; 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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