

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Gems Day Nursery,
Dundonald

Report of an Inspection in
April 2015

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning 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; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire or to meet with the inspection team.

The parental responses to the questionnaire indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the playgroup. In particular, the parents commented on the friendly and caring staff who have created an attractive and well-organised learning environment for the children, and the very good communication through informative newsletters and the parental notice board. The responses from the staff indicated they were very satisfied with most aspects of their work.

2. Context

The two pre-school rooms are located within the premises of Little Gems Day Nursery in Dundonald. The playgroup has been in the Pre-school Programme since 2013. A new pre-school manager has been in post since September 2014.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Very good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are happy and engage enthusiastically in the wide range of activities provided. Almost all of the children collaborate well in sustained and purposeful play. They display high levels of concentration and persevere with tasks until completion. All of the children have excellent self-management skills and demonstrate independence in choosing activities and organising their own play.
- Almost all of the children communicate confidently with their peers and adults. Most of the children recognise their name and can label their own work. During story time, the children listen attentively and participate enthusiastically when singing songs and reciting rhymes. The children are developing well an interest in mark-making and can, for example, draw plans for their farm buildings and vehicles before constructing them.
- The promotion of early mathematical experiences and the world around us are key features of the provision. Consequently, almost all of the children are developing well their ability to sort, match, count and use accurately prepositional language. A significant minority of the children were observed using the correct mathematical vocabulary when measuring and weighing. The children are naturally inquisitive and use their senses to explore the wide range of interesting materials in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.

6. Provision

- The provision is child-centred where staff have created a rich and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, to promote enjoyment and progression in learning. Well-chosen books are integrated effectively into each of the learning areas and a wide range of carefully chosen writing materials are used to promote mark-making in meaningful contexts. The daily routines are used very effectively to promote and extend the learning; for example, the snack routine reinforces mathematical thinking and develops well the children's personal and social skills.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently very good and often outstanding. The adults have an excellent knowledge of the pre-school curriculum and engage purposefully with the children, building effectively on their ideas and interests. The staff encourage the children to observe, recall, predict and problem solve as they play alongside the children.
- The written planning is detailed and evaluated regularly. It takes very good account of the individual needs of the children and their responses to the activities. The staff carry out focused observations in each of the areas of learning and are making more effective use of the observations to inform the planning. The staff have participated recently in training on positive behaviour management and have implemented a range of appropriate strategies to support the children. There is very effective support in place to help those children with additional learning needs.

- The provision for the pastoral care within the playgroup is outstanding. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos underpinned by mutual respect between the adults and the children.
- The playgroup gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Of significant note are the excellent opportunities for the children to engage in creative and energetic play on a daily basis.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff team are highly motivated and enthusiastic. All of the adults work well collaboratively within each playroom and there is clear evidence of teamwork between the two playrooms. The staff are using well the indicators within ETI's 'Together Towards Improvement' to evaluate their practice and the pre-school's development plan identifies appropriate areas for development. The playgroup has benefited from effective support from two independent early years specialists.
- Parents are informed regularly of the pre-school activities through monthly newsletters and the playroom notice boards. Weekly library books and regular home-school activities ensure that parents have an opportunity to work in partnership with the staff to support the children with their learning. The very good pastoral and curricular links with local primary schools, coupled with the informative transition booklets, foster smooth transitions into year 1. There are excellent links with outside agencies.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION LITTLE GEMS DAY NURSERY, DUNDONALD

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	47	-
in their immediate pre-school year	44	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	41	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	32	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	4	-
with English as an additional language	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	188

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
2½ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	4	5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	2

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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