

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Little Rays Day Nursery's  
Playgroup, Lambeg, County  
Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2016

## 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 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 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; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

A very small number of parents and all of the staff responded to the questionnaire. Most of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In written comments the parents highlighted their satisfaction with the playgroup and the activities that their child has enjoyed. The staff responses were wholly positive. The ETI has reported to the playgroup leader and to the proprietor of the day nursery the main messages emerging from the parental and staff questionnaires

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

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

## 3. Context

Little Rays Day Nursery is a privately operated childcare facility situated in the village of Lambeg, County Antrim. The day nursery operates a pre-school playgroup accommodated in a self-contained building on the premises with access to a large outdoor area. This is the first inspection of the setting since they entered the Pre-School Expansion Programme.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are well-settled and engage purposefully throughout the session. They are confident in approaching adults for help and support. Most of the children engage in social and collaborative play; however, a minority of the children are still reliant on the adults in order to sustain their play. The children need to be provided with greater access to a range of resources in order to raise further their levels of independence.
- Almost all of the children have very good speech and language skills. They listen attentively and with enjoyment during the group story time. The children recognise their names and a small number are beginning to write their name. The children's interest in early mark-making and representational drawings is under-developed.
- During the inspection, a small number of children engaged in a weighing activity and showed a good understanding of the concept of heavier and lighter. Most of the children use positional language appropriately and a small number of children showed a keen interest in using the measuring tapes during outdoor play.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Overall, the children's educational programme consists of satisfactory to good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The medium- and short-term planning gives clear guidance to the staff on the learning to be developed; however, the quality of the learning experiences across the majority of the areas of the pre-school curriculum is not good enough. The staff provide insufficient opportunities, in both indoor and outdoor play, for the children to develop their interest in and understanding of The World Around Us and The Arts. The planning and provision for outdoor play is under-developed; the staff have identified the need to develop both aspects further and inspection endorses the appropriateness of this priority.
- The routines in the playgroup provide support for the children in transitions throughout the session. The transition from outdoor to indoor play is not managed well enough to ensure that the children can move swiftly from one setting to another. The staff have reviewed the layout of the playroom and endeavour to make the most of the available space, however, the children are constrained from accessing the resources they need independently to extend and enhance their chosen play.
- The staff evaluate the planning on a weekly basis and respond to the interests of the children. They make regular observations of the children's learning and link these well to the planning. The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently good quality. In the best practice, the staff use open-ended questions and extend the children's problem-solving skills by encouraging them to investigate and observe. During the inspection, incidental learning opportunities were not used effectively to develop the children's understanding of early mathematics and the World Around Us.

- The staff have recently engaged in training through the Early Years Inclusion Service and have put in place individual education plans to support a small number of children. The targets and the strategies to be used are not outlined clearly enough to enable the children's progress to be measured and recorded.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the playgroup is good. There is a calm, friendly ethos and there are very good working relationships between the staff and the children. The staff have developed effectively their use of a range of positive behaviour strategies and are consistent in their application; the children respond very well to these approaches and their behaviour is very good.
- The playgroup gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the good opportunities for energetic physical activity. Aspects of the snack routine are not satisfactory and need to be reviewed.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The self-evaluation and development planning processes are not yet sufficiently developed to bring about further improvements to the provision. With the continued good quality support and guidance of their independent early years specialist, the leaders need to build further on the effective team approach which has successfully brought about a number of improvements to the provision and on the development work already done on planning and assessment of learning and in their understanding of self-evaluation. The leader and staff in the playgroup are well supported by the management of the day nursery.
- There are good links with the parents and the parent newsletter provides good information on the current theme and the learning focus. The actions that the playgroup has taken to develop its links with the local primary schools to facilitate the children's transition are appropriate. Good use is made of visitors to the setting, along with planned trips, to enrich the children's learning.
- The centre has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Little Rays Day Nursery's playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement which include the need:

- to improve further the quality of the provision for learning across the areas of the pre-school curriculum for both indoor and outdoor play; and
- for the leadership and management, with the continued support of their early years specialist, to extend and develop the self-evaluation and development planning processes to bring about further improvements to the provision.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON LITTLE RAYS DAY NURSERY PLAYGROUP

### 1. Details of children

<b>Number of children:</b>	
Attending full-time	
Attending part-time	23
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	23
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	***
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.

\*\*\* Denotes a number less than 5.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	44%
Average attendance for the previous year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	180

### 2. Duration of sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
	9:00 am-11:30 am	

### 3. Details of staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		1
New appointments within the previous 12 months		0

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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