

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Little Villagers Playgroup, Armagh

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No: 5AB-0210

Report of an Inspection in October 2019



Providing inspection services for:

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1. Context

Little Villagers' Playgroup is located in purpose-built modular accommodation in the village of Glenanne, County Armagh. The number of pre-school funded children attending the playgroup has reduced by almost half since the time of the last inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	13
Funded by Department of Education	13
At CoP stages 3 or 4*	#
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	13
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	190

Source: data provided by the setting.

* 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

A minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses from the staff and parents were wholly positive. In their written comments, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the caring and approachable staff. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the leader and a representative from the management committee.

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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children are very well-settled and engage for sustained periods of time in purposeful and collaborative play. They have very good levels of independence as they: self-register on arrival and at break; follow confidently the established routines; and, choose and access freely resources and materials for play. The children are at ease with the staff and approach them confidently to show them their work and to ask for any assistance they may require.
- Almost all of the children, including those identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning, are making very good progress across almost all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. They paint and print independently and with confidence, using a range of self-selected tools and objects, such as their hands, rollers, brushes and sponges. Their representational artwork is of a high standard. The children have very good levels of concentration; they thoroughly enjoy the whole-group story and many of them access books independently during the session.
- The children have a very good understanding of the mathematical concepts and language associated with measures, number and shape and they use their mathematical learning well during play. They engage in high quality collaborative and investigative play at the dough, construction and role-play areas.
- The children have well-developed fine motor skills and manipulate with ease the range of small play equipment and tools across the playroom. Their gross motor, games and turn-taking skills are developing well as they climb, balance, throw and push during outdoor play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have created an attractive learning environment which provides good opportunities for learning across all areas of the curriculum. The wide range of natural and commercial resources available to the children promotes the development of the children's independence, self-management and decision-making skills. There are insufficient opportunities across the playroom for the children to engage in mark making for meaningful purposes.
- The quality of the staff interactions with the children is very good. The staff know the children well; they role model play skilfully and respond appropriately to the children's needs and interests.
- The cycle of planning, observation and assessment is generally good and guides well the daily learning and teaching. The intended learning and subsequent evaluations of learning for indoor planning however tend to be too general on occasions and do not always focus sufficiently on the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The nurturing environment, high quality interactions and effective working relationships promote the children's self-esteem and independence.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff are professional and enthusiastic and work effectively as a team. They articulate a shared vision for the future of the playgroup and have an established process of self-evaluation and action planning. Aspects of the process lack sufficient rigour, particularly the evaluation of the impact of actions to promote improvement on the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children. There has been inconsistency in support from the early years organisation over the past year which has impacted on the pace of the strategic planning for improvement. The management committee are supportive of the staff.
- There are effective links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through an informative monthly newsletter and parent noticeboard. The playgroup has been involved in a number of initiatives to support parents as part of the 'Getting Ready to Learn' strategy including 'The Big Bedtime Read'.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant departments. There is a need however for the playgroup to:

- ensure that all relevant child protection and safeguarding training is completed by members of the management committee at the earliest opportunity.

9. Overall effectiveness

Little Villagers Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There is an area for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is:

- to develop, with support from the early years specialist and management committee, a more formal, shared approach to evaluating the impact of the process of planning for improvement.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup 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:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; 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:

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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