

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Loughgall Playgroup,
County Armagh

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
December 2018



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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1. Context

Loughgall Playgroup is located in the village of Loughgall, County Armagh and the children enrolled all come from the surrounding rural area. Since the previous inspection, the playgroup has relocated to new, purpose-built accommodation.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	23
Funded by Department of Education	13
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**	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	#
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	82%
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

A minority of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were very positive regarding the work and life of the playgroup. In written comments, the parents highlighted the high quality communication from the playgroup, the caring approach of the staff and the wide range of interesting experiences provided for the children. All of the responses were shared with the leadership and management.

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	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children, including those with additional learning needs, are settled and follow the well-considered routines of the day. They attain very good standards across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- All of the children: self-register at arrival and snack time; make independent choices for play; and, work collaboratively to create and explore using the wide range of authentic and natural resources. They also participate in self-chosen activities for extended periods. Most of the children persevere with activities when they present a challenge, but can also seek help when it is required. Their understanding of prepositional language is very good.
- The children's personal, social and emotional skills are well-developed; they interact confidently with each other and respect both their own and other children's play. They follow instructions accurately, listen attentively at story time and participate enthusiastically in songs and rhymes.
- The children who are identified as having additional learning needs are well integrated within the group and are making good progress.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff plan and implement a broad and balanced pre-school programme with very good opportunities for learning across the areas of the pre-school curriculum. There is an effective routine for the day which enables the children to develop their learning through a good balance of freely chosen play and group activities.
- The indoor learning environment is stimulating and thoughtfully presented to enable the children to access materials and resources independently and have space to develop their ideas and learning. It is enhanced by attractive displays of the children's own art work.
- The staff take account of the age range of the children and their previous experience when planning the daily activities. Their observations of the children's play are holistic and build an accurate picture of each child's progress. There are very good opportunities for learning across the pre-school curriculum in outdoor play. The children utilise the high and low level play resources confidently to develop their physical skills and the inclusion of numbered vehicles and parking spaces is providing improved opportunities for children to consolidate their understanding of number.
- The staff interact skilfully with the children to promote effective learning. They model language, use open-ended questions and listen to the children; providing relevant descriptions of what the child is doing or experiencing in order to enrich the children's vocabulary.
- Children who have additional learning needs are identified early. The staff foster well the children's self-esteem and promote their learning by planning effectively to help them to gain confidence and experience success in their play.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on outcomes. The staff recognise and nurture respect for others and implement positive behaviour management strategies very effectively and as a result the children are confident and well behaved.

7. Leadership and management

- The playgroup is led, organised and managed very effectively. The leader, staff team and management committee work collaboratively with a clear vision of providing high quality pre-school education.
- The early years specialist, from the Early Years Organisation, supports the staff very effectively, to identify appropriate aspects of the provision and curriculum for further development.
- The playgroup's approach to development planning and self-evaluation is reflective. The staff all contribute to timely reviews of practice and identify accurately, the strengths of the playgroup and child-centred priorities for further development. This leads to notable improvement within all aspects of the playgroup. Following self-evaluation, the outdoor play area was improved recently in order to optimise the use of the limited space. This has increased the children's opportunities for energetic and physical play.
- The playgroup has established an effective partnership with the parents, most recently through the Big Bedtime Read programme. Information about the children's progress and development is gathered frequently and is shared at key times throughout the year with the parents. There are also effective links with the main feeder primary schools to ensure a smooth transition for the children.

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

Loughgall Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children.

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, 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

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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