

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mallusk Community Playgroup,
Mallusk, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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

Mallusk Community Playgroup is situated in mobile accommodation in the grounds of Academy Sports Club, Mallusk. The playgroup is into its fifth year in the existing premises. As well as the playroom, the children have access to an outdoor play area. Since the last inspection, a new member of staff has been appointed and the number of children has increased. At the time of the inspection there was no functioning management committee in place.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	23
Attending part-time	8
Under 3 years of age*	9
Funded by Department of Education	19
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	#

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

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of the parents and most of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The written comments praised the well-organised and child-centred learning environment and professional, caring staff. The questionnaire responses were shared with the staff and a representative of 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	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

- The children are resilient learners; they interact positively and access all areas and available resources within the playroom and outdoors with confidence and ease. They are developing well their self-management skills, including how to express their feelings and emotions appropriately when working with others. Most respond enthusiastically to the staff's encouragement and high expectations.
- Most of the children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts, including number, measures and shape, which they use in meaningful contexts; particularly within the construction and creative areas. Their representational artwork and the interesting and relevant investigations they carry out, indicate the children's level of curiosity and their early ability to observe and investigate the world around them.
- The children browse favourite books together in the 'read and relax' area and bring their imaginative ideas to life independently within the role play area. They operate their daily routines well, for example, knowing to wash their hands after feeding the playgroup hamsters and before handling food. All of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making continuous progress in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- Both indoors and outdoors, the staff provide a stimulating learning environment. Effective use is made of all the available space and well-chosen authentic and natural resources to extend the children's learning experiences and foster their growing self-reliance.
- The staff use effectively their observations and assessments of how the children are developing and learning to inform the future planning; as a consequence, the planning takes ongoing account of, and is responsive to, the children's needs and interests.
- The quality of the staff interactions often extends the children's language and thinking and prompts the children to try out their own ideas. The staff make frequent and effective use of spontaneous opportunities to extend the children's learning further.
- The staff provide well-managed activities containing additional challenge to develop the children's physical skills. For example, the children are supported to use authentic small drills, hammers and saws in the construction area and to build their gymnastic skills of jumping, climbing and balancing on and from the tractor tyres and wooden beams outdoors.

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are supported sensitively and included fully in all of the learning activities. There is effective communication with the parents in relation to the children's individual needs and the progress they are making.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on all aspects of the children's learning and well-being.

7. Leadership and management

- There are effective team approaches and a clear shared vision within the playgroup; the individual strengths of staff members are identified and used creatively to bring benefit to the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The leader and treasurer reported difficulty in attracting and recruiting parents to join the management committee in support of the playgroup's work; this matter needs to be addressed in the best interests of staff and the children.
- The staff's self-evaluation and development planning processes lead to continuous improvement in key areas of the playgroup's provision in the best interests of the children.
- The playgroup employs an early years specialist to support its work; there are productive working relationships and the staff respond positively to any recommendations given.
- There is positive communication with the parents who value the staff's work with the children and effective working links with the neighbouring primary school.

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

Mallusk Community Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

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 treasurer of 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 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 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2018

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk