

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Millburn Community Pre-school Playgroup, Coleraine, County Londonderry

Voluntary Playgroup DE Ref No: 3AB-0248

Report of an Inspection in December 2019



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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1. Context

Millburn Community Pre-school Playgroup is accommodated in a dedicated, propose-built room within a community centre. The adjoining outdoor play area has recently been re-furnished. The children attending the pre-school come from the surrounding area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	26
Under 3 years of age*	#
Funded by Department of Education	24
With English as an additional language	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	5%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	85%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

A majority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive, and the additional written comments were highly complementary about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. In particular, the parents appreciated: the commitment of the staff to the progress, care and well-being of all the children; the excellent communication; and, how much their children enjoy the creative learning activities. The staff communicated their appreciation of the team approach to meeting the children's needs and the valuable staff training and development opportunities. 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	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 making very good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They engage enthusiastically in self-initiated play activities, and almost all of the children play purposefully for sustained periods of time. The children move assuredly between indoor and outdoor play areas and access materials and resources independently. They take increasing consideration of the needs and interests of others, show respect in turn-taking and are very well-behaved.
- Most of the children are developing very good language and communication skills and they interact confidently with staff and each other. They have a keen interest in books and early mark making during play, and listen and participate well during group story and singing time. The children experiment creatively with musical instruments and create and perform imaginative pieces.
- The children understand early mathematical concepts such as number, shape and measure and use mathematical language confidently during play, and during the social routines of the day. They engage eagerly in investigative play with dough, construction and water and enjoy estimating, and problem solving, particularly during outdoor play activities.

6. Quality of provision

- The very good quality of the stimulating environment and learning programme is a key strength of the provision. The staff prioritise the use of authentic and seasonal resources, both indoors and outdoors, to develop the children's curiosity and creativity and to maximise their ownership of the space. In all areas of learning, the children are encouraged to experiment, take risks and make independent decisions and their contributions and creations are appropriately valued and celebrated.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is consistently very good. The staff engage skilfully with the children, focusing intently on enabling child-lead learning and supporting appropriately children who may need additional help.
- Planning covers all areas of the pre-school curriculum and there is evidence of progression in the learning as a result. The cycle of planning, observation and assessment guides well the staff in identifying the children's next stages in learning and is currently being developed further to reflect the current priority focus on child-lead 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. A highly nurturing, inclusive ethos is evident, and the children's voice is central to all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management, through effective team-work, is highly committed to meeting the holistic needs of the children within a nurturing, safe environment. The staff work collegially on all aspects of leadership and improvement, and have developed a positive climate for peer and self-evaluation and sharing good practice. The development plan and associated action plans focus appropriately on improving the learning outcomes for the children.
- The playgroup does not employ an external early years specialist. A positive start has been made to prioritising and meeting the development needs of the playgroup and good attention is given to researching and trialling new early years initiatives.
- The playgroup has established very purposeful links with parents who benefit from regular meetings, both formal and informal, and the very regular contact through an electronic app. Effective links with feeder primary schools exist and links with the local community include the children visiting the nearby nursing home to sing for the residents.
- The management group are well informed about all aspects of the playgroup including the children's progress and wellbeing.

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

Millburn Community Pre-school 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 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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