

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Muckamore Pre-School  
Playgroup, Antrim

Voluntary community playgroup

Report of an inspection in  
October 2016

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The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## 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, 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 a representative of the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

All of the staff responded to the staff questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. There were no responses to the parental 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

Muckamore Pre-School Playgroup operates in the Muckamore Community Centre Complex which is owned and maintained by Antrim Borough Council. The playgroup also has the use of a large hall and access to a council owned play park close by. The children who attend come from the immediate and wider surrounding area.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are confident and settled; they interact co-operatively for extended periods in purposeful and concentrated play. For the time of year, the children's independence and self-management skills are very good; they respond positively to the high expectations of the staff and the regular daily routines. The children mix easily with the staff and visitors, and enjoy sharing and talking about their work and achievements. They access the materials and equipment they need independently and listen attentively to group stories. The children are making very good progress in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children engage with high levels of curiosity in the carefully planned and imaginatively presented activities; they produce detailed representational artwork using a wide range of materials and carry out interesting investigations which help them to develop their understanding of topics such as growing plants and food, the life-cycles of mini-beasts and recycling and re-using leftover items. They are developing well their motor skills through using the various authentic tools and equipment provided indoors and outdoors. The children browse and enjoy story and fact books and are developing well their understanding of key mathematical concepts, such as number, measures and shape.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The staff work successfully create a very engaging and child-centred learning environment; the children's current learning themes and work are celebrated and annotated using the children's own language. The available space is used effectively to progress the children's independence and self-management skills, and to extend learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is consistently very good. The staff are skilful in helping the children to connect their learning and in making the most of incidental opportunities for further learning as they arise. The adults model positive play and social behaviours and use open-ended questions to extend the children's thinking and build their language and problem solving skills.
- The planning is informative and appropriately detailed; the observation and assessment of the children's responses inform well the future planning and outline progression and challenge to reflect the children's interests and to meet their individual needs.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack for the children and an appropriate period for energetic physical play outdoors.
- The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. There is a welcoming family ethos which permeates all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup with the staff taking constant account of the children's needs and interests.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- There is a successful collaborative team approach within the playgroup which makes effective use of the staff's complementary skills. The leader is supported very well by the skilful and dedicated staff and management committee in all areas of the life and work of the playgroup. The staff's positive approach to self-evaluation leads to continuous improvement in all areas of the playgroup's provision.
- There are effective working links and positive communication with the parents who are very supportive of the work of the playgroup. Valuable and productive partnerships have also been established with the feeder primary schools, local businesses and other early years' practitioners and support agencies for the benefit of the children.
- The playgroup employs an independent early years specialist to support its work; the open and high-quality working relationships bring about continuous improvement in the provision for the children.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Muckamore Pre-School 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.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON MUCKAMORE PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending part-time	26		
Funded by Department of Education	26		
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#		
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#		

**Source:** data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

\* On 1 July past.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

# Numbers fewer than 5 are redacted.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	3
Average attendance for the previous year.	90
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
	9.00-11.30	

3. Details of staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within the previous 12 months		0

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

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

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