

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Orchard Pre-School,  
Loughgall, County Armagh

Voluntary pre-school 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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	1
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

Orchard Pre-school Playgroup is located in purpose-built modular accommodation situated in the grounds of St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Loughgall, County Armagh. Since the last inspection in 2011, a new deputy leader has been appointed.

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1
Attending part-time	26
Funded by Department of Education	18
At CoP stages 1 or 2 *	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	95.5
Number of days open in previous school year	186

**Source:** data provided by the setting

# fewer than 5

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

## 2. Views of parents and staff

Fifty percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were wholly positive about the life and work of the playgroup. The parents highlighted in particular their appreciation of the hardworking, supportive staff and commented on how happy and well settled their children are.

## 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Important areas for improvement

## 5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children are well-settled and are forming good friendships with one another; their behaviour is good.
- The children respond positively to the established routines of the playroom and are developing well their independence as they: serve their own snack; make transitions from one play activity to another; and, put on and remove their outdoor clothing and footwear.

- Most of the children are making good progress across most areas of the pre-school curriculum. They engage in purposeful, collaborative play for sustained periods, most notably, at the construction and junk-art areas. The children show good concentration and perseverance as they complete a range of jigsaws and number puzzles.
- The children talk confidently with each other and with their key workers during the small-group-time activities. A small number of them avail of mark-making opportunities at the writing area and outdoors. The children enjoy the group story; they listen attentively and talk enthusiastically about the story with the leader. Most of the children's representational artwork is of a good standard.
- The children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and language, particularly in early number, measures and shape.
- The children have good fine and gross motor skills. They prepare and serve their own snack, mould dough to make creations of their choice, and use scissors with developing confidence at the junk-art construction area. In the outdoor area, the children engage in energetic play as they pedal, run, jump and balance.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The staff plan the programme using a commercial scheme. Although there is planning in place across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, the intended learning within each area is not always clear enough. The planning is not differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of both the pre-school and the underage children. There are insufficient opportunities for the children to: sustain and extend independently their own play; investigate; and develop their creativity.
- The staff make regular observations of the children's learning and in the best practice they use this information effectively to inform future planning, in particular for their small-group-time sessions.
- The staff have created an attractive and well-organised playroom which is laid out into distinct areas for learning in line with the High Scope methodology. The learning environment does not provide sufficient areas of interest and additional resources to arouse the children's natural curiosity to ask questions and develop their creativity.
- There are well-embedded routines which promote the development of the children's independence, language and mathematical learning. The management of time during the transitions is impacting negatively on the children's opportunities to engage in 'free' play.
- The interactions between the staff and the children are of a consistently good and very good standard. The staff listen to and respond appropriately to the children's needs, requests and interests. During the small-group-time sessions, the staff develop well the children's language and mathematical understanding and encourage them to problem solve.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The staff's consistent and effective approach to promoting positive behaviour is a strength in the setting.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- All of the staff, the early years specialist from the Early Years' Organisation, and the management committee work collegially in the best interests of the children. A commitment to self-evaluation has been established, however the staff do not have a shared understanding of development planning and continuous effective self-evaluation leading to improvement. It will be important that leadership and management ensure that the level of challenge and quality of provision for the pre-school aged children is not compromised in order to meet the needs of the underage children.
- There are good links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through: the range of supportive information on display in the foyer; an informative monthly newsletter and regular meetings.

## **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. However, the playgroup needs to ensure that relevant safeguarding and child protection training is up-to-date for all designated and deputy designated personnel, on both the staff team and management committee.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Orchard Pre-school Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve planning in order to provide more opportunities for high quality, investigative and independent play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- to develop a shared understanding of development planning and continuous effective self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

**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 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.

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