

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Peatlands Community Playgroup, Portadown, County Armagh

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE Ref No: 5AB 0396

Report of an Inspection in February 2020



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

Peatlands Community Playgroup is situated within a purpose-built pre-school centre set within a spacious outdoor area. It is located outside the town of Portadown, County Armagh. The children come mainly from the local area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At Cop stages 1 or 2	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	?%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	?%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

Source: data provided by the setting.

fewer than 5

*On 1 July past

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

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of the parents responded to the questionnaire. All of their responses were positive about the life and work of the pre-school and a small number highlighted the care of the staff for the children. A majority of the staff completed the staff questionnaire and their responses were affirming of the work of the pre-school and the supportive role of the committee. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the leadership 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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children, including those identified with additional learning needs, are making good progress for the time of year in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They settle quickly, make choices from the range of interesting activities and maintain high levels of self-initiated, concentrated play throughout the day. The children have a good understanding of the routines in the playgroup and transition smoothly to outdoor play. They have very good levels of independence; accessing resources and self-managing at the snack routine.
- The children engage productively in small groups and in pairs to share ideas about people who help us in the local community. They are imaginative in role play, have very good turn-taking skills and readily turn to the adults for support to extend their play. Small groups of children were observed negotiating and self-regulating their behaviours when sharing resources at the sand and dough activities.
- The children enjoy singing rhymes and counting jingles; joining in with actions and physical movements. Their language and communication skills, and mathematical language for counting, size and shape and early measurement concepts are appropriately developed for their varying ages and stages of development. The children are beginning to make a link between drawing pictures and the adult adding text in a speech bubble to represent their spoken word.
- The children's mark making and artwork shows individuality and good representations of their ideas of the world around them. They take great pride in showing their work to the staff.
- The children use confidently a range of fine motor skills to cut with scissors, paint, draw, pour and fill containers. The children gain good gross motor skills to run, jump and to cycle in the outdoor area.
- Although the children are developing an interest in natural materials and planting and growing the spring bulbs, their experimentation and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped, particularly during play with sand and water.

6. Quality of provision

- The quality of provision is good. The staff have compiled a range of planning for the curriculum and have appropriately identified the planning and assessment processes as an ongoing area of development, in order to ensure that the voice of the child and their interests are included in the provision for learning. Currently, the cycle of observation and assessment, to inform planning for progression and curricular connections across the six areas of learning in the pre-school curriculum, lacks sufficient detail to fully guide the staff in consistently high quality interactions with the children to extend further their learning. Good progress has been made in listening to the needs of the children and in developing an online approach to recording their progress in learning and sharing the information with the parents.
- Overall, the quality of the staff interaction is good. In the best practice, the staff follow the lead of the children in play and sustain conversation with the children building effectively on their interests; however, there are missed opportunities to promote all the learning inherent in the activities and routines of the day.

- There are effective strategies used to support all children and an inclusive ethos within the playgroup through which the children with additional needs are making progress and are well-integrated in the activities. The individual education plans and the policy for special educational needs are underdeveloped.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on the children's outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the playgroup has important areas for improvement. The capacity for strategic leadership and management at all levels is underdeveloped. The three year development plan and the processes in place for self-evaluation and action planning are not sufficiently developed. While the staff and committee set appropriate priorities for improvement, the monitoring arrangements are insufficiently focused on the evaluation of the impact for learning and the outcomes for the children.
- The representative of the management committee reports appropriate staff supervision arrangements and good working relationships with the staff and parents, and the local community. The management of the update and review of a number of safeguarding policies and the SEN policy lacks systematic organisation.
- There are informal links with the local primary schools to which the children transfer; however, these lack the curricular focus needed to ensure well-informed transitions for the children. Very recently, the staff have identified opportunities to strengthen transitional links, and are hosting at the playgroup, a relevant joint training session with a local primary school on special educational needs.
- The independent early years specialist (EYS) provides effective advice and guidance for the staff which they value and use to improve their work. The impact of the advice is evident in the ongoing support for the staff to develop further the observation and assessment processes, language development and the pre-school provision in line with the areas set out in the development plan. Management committee training has been provided on roles and responsibilities of committee members which are currently being developed.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory¹.

The areas which must be improved urgently include:

- developing robust procedures for recording risk assessments for all visits, particularly to those settings with other unknown adults;

¹ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the relevant authority that they are working with the playgroup in relation to the inspection report.

- ensuring that the child protection policies and suite of associated policies are updated to reflect the most recent safeguarding guidance from the Department of Education; and
- ensuring that the parents are consulted and informed of the policy developments and that there are procedures for reviewing policies, developing a shared staff understanding of policies and reporting to the committee.

9. Overall effectiveness

Peatlands Community Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop further the cycle of observation and assessment to inform planning for progression and curricular connections across the six areas of learning in the pre-school curriculum in order to ensure consistently high quality staff interaction;
- develop further, with the support and guidance of the early years specialist, a higher capacity for leadership and management at all levels; and
- to address the unsatisfactory safeguarding.

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

The ETI will return to the playgroup within six working weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding.

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 a representative of the management committee;
- a meeting with the early years specialist; 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 management²:

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

² 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:

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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