

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Play and Learn Playgroup,  
Belfast

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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## 1. Context

Play and Learn Playgroup is a voluntary playgroup located in Holy Cross Girls' Primary School. The playgroup has its own separate entrance and playground facilities. Two new assistants have been employed since the last inspection. A new early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation has very recently taken up her role in supporting the staff. There has, however, been a lack of continuity in the early years specialist support in recent years.

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1
Attending part-time	16
Funded by Department of Education	16
With English as an additional language	#

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

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\* On 1 July.

# fewer than 5

## 2. Views of parents and staff

There were no parental responses to the confidential questionnaire. At the time of the inspection the ETI met with the staff individually and all members spoke positively about the life and work of the playgroup.

## 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

- All of the children are well settled and engage in sustained and purposeful play. They interact well with each other and with the staff, persevere with tasks and are independent in meeting many of their own needs.
- The children have good listening skills, can follow instructions and participate well in daily routines such as snack, story time and outdoor play. They clearly enjoy the learning opportunities available to them both indoors and outdoors.

- There is limited evidence of detailed representational art work on display and as a result of the lack of sufficient detail in the children's written records there is no accurate measurement of progress in their learning and development to date; however, the staff report all of the children have progressed well in their learning and development from they started the playgroup.
- The children with additional needs are well-integrated within the group.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The written planning does not identify sufficiently the learning potential of the planned activities in supporting all areas of the pre-school curriculum, nor take the necessary account of the individual needs, interests and responses of all the children to ensure progression in their learning. The staff do, however, use appropriate themes and topics across the year to add interest and variety to the programme.
- The method of observing, recording and, in particular, assessing the children's progress and development requires further development. During the inspection, the staff demonstrated that they know the children well and use the information gained through their interactions with them to inform future learning and to meet their individual needs.
- There is no documentation to outline the support provided and the progress made for those children who require assistance with aspects of their learning and development. The staff need to ensure that appropriate information and records are kept to address this issue.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is variable and needs to be more consistently of a high standard. On the occasions during the inspection when good interaction was observed the staff engaged well with the children in incidental play opportunities to build on their personal interests and experiences and to promote mathematical awareness; however, at times, there were missed opportunities to develop their language and learning.
- The organisation of the day provides for lengthy periods of indoor and outdoor play and the children are secure in the smooth transitions for outdoor play and story time.
- The staff present an attractive learning environment for the children which covers a very large area. The available space impacts negatively, at times, on opportunities for the staff and children to participate in more collaborative play and for the staff to ensure consistency in their approach to learning and teaching. While a range of good quality resources are available for the children, there are few natural and authentic items incorporated into areas of play. In a few areas there is no alternative selection of resources available to contribute to, or enhance, the quality of the children's play.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on their learning and development. The children are forming positive relationships with the adults and one another which is evident in their personal and social skills.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The process of self-evaluation is underdeveloped and while the staff have identified some appropriate priorities for improvement and development they have not yet collated reliable evidence to support these. The associated action plans lack sufficient detail to guide the work of the staff in ensuring high quality preschool provision at all levels.
- There have been numerous changes in early years specialist (EYS) personnel from the Early Years Organisation in recent years. The staff and management report that this inconsistency has impacted negatively on staff development and aspects of the quality of the provision and leadership and management.
- The playgroup has established effective links with the parents, relevant agencies and the main feeder primary schools for the benefit of the children.

## **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**

Play and Learn Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the processes for planning, observation and assessment; and
- for the leadership and management, with the support of the EYS, to extend and develop self-evaluation and development planning to ensure high quality provision at all levels.

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;
- a meeting with individual staff members regarding aspects of their work and professional development; 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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