

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Puddleducks Playgroup,
Omagh, County Tyrone

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
December 2018

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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

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1. Context

Puddleducks Playgroup is situated in Camphill Community, Clanabogan on the outskirts of Omagh town. The children have appropriately supervised access to the wide range of outdoor learning experiences available as part of the community provision. The children come mainly from the local area. The setting has a small number of children in their penultimate pre-school year who attend on various days. There have been no changes in staff since the previous inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	15
Under 3 years of age	8
Funded by Department of Education	15
Who left in the previous year to attend reception provision in a primary school	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	15%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	80%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

All of the staff completed the confidential questionnaire and the responses, including the written ones, were all very positive. Twenty-seven percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires and their responses, including a small number of written comments, were all positive about the life and work of the playgroup. They praised highly the nurturing and caring staff for their support to help the children to settle well and enjoy learning.

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	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children concentrate and engage in purposeful and productive play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They are confident to choose activities and materials and have well-developed levels of collaborative play. The children have very good levels of self-awareness and are beginning to show empathy towards others; sharing and negotiation skills are an integral part of the children's play. The children are forming friendships and are helpful and respectful to one another.
- The children's language and understanding is progressing well according to their individual stages of development. They are able to sing counting rhymes and nativity songs, and have a good sense of simple rhythms. Listening and attention skills during the group story and individual stories are well developed. The children independently take on roles in home corner and small world play areas and show an imaginative use of language to sustain high quality social play.
- The children's use and understanding of early mathematical concepts is a key strength. They persevere and problem-solve during block play and respond with enthusiasm to the new challenges to extend their learning about the properties of shapes, balance, patterns and the use of space to create and design models. Sorting, early counting and matching concepts and the children's use of mathematical language during the snack, tidying routines and incidental play is well developed.
- The children's natural curiosity in their learning environment is evident in their questions to adults, recall of previous learning and interest in the wide variety of shrubs, trees, plants and fruits in the outdoor area. The children enjoy observing and exploring and create representational artwork to show their understanding. Their fine and gross motor skills are well developed. During the inspection, the children were confident to run energetically in the grassed area, climb over mounds and walk uphill exploring and comparing the different ground surfaces. A small number of the children enjoyed jumping in puddles and observing their reflections.

6. Quality of provision

- The well-organised indoor and outdoor learning environment is creatively prepared by the staff to engage the children's interests and to stimulate high quality learning experiences. The staff are committed to child-centred provision and many of the wooden resources and natural materials are chosen or designed within the local community as open-ended materials to support creative thinking and learning. A welcoming family ethos pervades the playgroup and the engagement of families in the community to help maintain the children's garden area and develop the learning environment, is an important factor in involving the children and families in ownership of the enriched pre-school programme.
- There are outstanding learning opportunities in all areas of the pre-school programme. The personal, social and emotional programme underpins all areas of the curriculum and the children are happy, safe and secure to create, explore and experiment through self-initiated play. All areas of learning are well-connected through the meaningful use of seasonal topics and the children's interests in the world around them. The written planning ensures progression throughout the year and is well-informed by the needs of the individual children.

- The quality of the staff interaction consistently promotes high quality play and learning. The staff observe and actively listen to the children, skilfully allowing time for the children to evolve their own ideas and appropriately intervening to extend language and thinking. The sensitive staff involvement supports the children's use of language to express their feelings and their own ideas and as a result the children are adventurous and creative in play. The staff interaction is meaningful and spontaneous based on their in-depth knowledge and observations of the individual children and their developmental stages.
- Parents are given regular feedback about their children's progress and advice and support for those children that may require assistance with aspects of their learning and development.
- The organisation of the day is well-structured to provide for lengthy periods of play including energetic play. There are smooth transitions at key times in the programme and the children are familiar with necessary routines. Closer monitoring by the staff of the children's hand washing is required for a small number of the children before snack and after outdoor play.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a child-centred, inclusive approach based on a warm and nurturing atmosphere created by the staff as positive role models for celebrating the natural world.

7. Leadership and management

- The outstanding leadership of the playgroup is based on a child-centred vision which is effectively managed through the teamwork and capacity of the staff to provide high quality pre-school education.
- There are a number of changes of early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) due to their restructuring process. The playgroup have worked closely with EYO over the years. The playgroup would benefit from support for updating aspects of the safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The representative of the management group reports very good working relationships and a good skills-set among the members to support the development of the playgroup. The process of self-evaluation and development planning is well embedded. The staff are reflective in their practice and gather a range of evidence to support their development process. They have identified appropriate priorities for improvement and development which inform the current development plan for the playgroup.
- The playgroup has effective links with several primary schools, relevant agencies and the local community to benefit the children. They are actively involved in Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn project and are effectively promoting the "Happy Healthy Kids" programme.

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 aspects of the child protection policy are updated to reflect the most recent safeguarding guidance from the Department of Education.

9. Overall effectiveness

Puddleducks 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 a representative of the management committee;
- a meeting with the recently appointed 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 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:

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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