

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Rainbow Stop Playgroup, Markethill, County Armagh

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No: 5AB-0209

Report of an Inspection in January 2020

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1. Context

Rainbow Stop Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation in the village of Markethill, County Armagh. The playgroup operates both a morning and afternoon session. There has been a number of changes in leadership and staffing since the time of the last inspection. At the time of the inspection a number of staff were carrying out leadership roles in an 'acting' capacity.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending part-time	25	24
Funded by Department of Education	25	24
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4*	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	0	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

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

fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive. The parents, in their written responses, commented on their appreciation of the friendly, approachable staff and on how happy their children are attending the playgroup. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the acting leader and a representative from 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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum. They are developing well their independence and self-management skills as they follow the established routines of the session, such as: self-registering on arrival and for break; self-serving at break; brushing their own teeth; and preparing to go outdoors. A very small number of children require further support with managing their behaviour.
- Most of the children have a good understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and language and are developing these naturally through play, the daily routines and rhymes. They engage in activities that promote their knowledge and understanding of number, sorting, shape and measure.
- Most of the children engage enthusiastically in the opportunities for creative arts available to them. They enjoy, in particular: composing their own music with the instruments in the music corner and joining in with the group action songs; playing collaboratively in the role-play area; and creating their own pieces of art using the range of materials and tools in the creative area.
- Most of the children are interested in books; they access books and other reading materials independently and also enjoy the large-group story.

6. Quality of provision

- The cycle of planning, observation and assessment does not guide sufficiently the learning and teaching. The medium-term planning lacks evidence of progression in learning on occasions and does not always inform the associated short-term planning; the intended learning in the short-term planning is often vague. While regular observations are completed on each child's learning across the curriculum, the quality of the information recorded is variable and insufficient use is made of the information gathered from these to inform formally the planning for all children.
- The staff have created a bright, welcoming and stimulating learning environment in which the children's representational artwork is celebrated and displayed. There are opportunities for learning across all areas of the curriculum and a good range of both natural and commercial resources are available to the children. Almost all routines and transitions are well-embedded and provide appropriate opportunities for the children to develop further their independence and self-management skills.
- The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is good. They know the children well, respond skilfully and pastorally to their needs and interests, and role model play effectively.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The caring staff and attractive well-resourced environment nurtures the children's self-esteem and confidence.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff and management committee work effectively together in the best interests of the children. They have a shared vision for the future of the playgroup and have established, with the support of their early years' specialist from the Early Years' Organisation, a process of self-evaluation leading to improvement. There is a development plan in place with appropriate areas for improvement; the targets on the supporting action plans however lack sufficient clarity and do not always focus clearly enough on effecting improvement in the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children.
- There are effective links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through, for example: social media, a text service, stay-and-play dates, a welcoming foyer and an informative monthly newsletter.

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. There is a need however for the playgroup to:

- update a number of safeguarding and child protection policies; and
- ensure that all relevant child protection and safeguarding training is completed by members of the management committee at the earliest opportunity.

9. Overall effectiveness

Rainbow Stop Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There are areas for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the cycle of planning, observation and assessment in order to guide more effectively the learning and teaching and improve further the outcomes for the children; and
- to embed further the process of self-evaluation and ensure identified targets focus more clearly on effecting improvement in the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children.

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 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 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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