

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rathkeltair Cross-Community
Playgroup, Downpatrick,
County Down

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2017



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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Rathkeltair Cross-Community Playgroup is located currently in a classroom in the main building of St Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick. Since the last inspection, a new assistant leader and assistant have been appointed. The staff plan to move to new purpose built premises beside St Brigid's Primary School in September 2017.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	0
Attending part-time	21
Under 3 years of age*	0
Funded by Department of Education	21
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0
With English as an additional language	0
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	7
Average attendance for the previous year.	94%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July

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

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirty-eight percent of the parents and almost all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; almost all of the parental responses and all of the staff responses were very positive. In the parents' written comments, they praised the attentive and approachable staff, the excellent communication through monthly newsletters and regular meetings and their children's enjoyment in attending the playgroup.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children settle quickly to play. Most of the children behave well and engage in purposeful and concentrated play. The children display good levels of independence; for example, they self-register on arrival, choose areas to play in, access resources required for their learning and assist with the preparation of the snack. While most of the children respond well to the rules and routines in the playroom, a minority of the children find the transition to outdoors more challenging.
- Most of the children are developing a good understanding of early mathematics. They count, match, sort, and use language associated with position and size. A minority are beginning to develop their understanding of ordinal number through stories. Most of the children show a good interest in books; they retell and dramatise stories in the indoor and outdoor learning environment. Most of the children show a good interest in mark making; yet, the children need access to a wider range of tools and materials to express their ideas and develop further their creativity.

6. Quality of provision

- The children's educational programme is well-balanced with good opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have adapted recently their short-term planning to include learning potential within each of the areas of play. This needs to be developed further, in particular the planning for outdoor play, to identify clearly the learning potential across the six areas of the curriculum.
- Regular and pertinent observations are made of the children's learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. It will be important to progress further the children's learning through linking the observations more effectively to the weekly planning.
- The staff provide an attractive learning environment within the limited space. The children's work is valued and celebrated in displays within the playroom. Most of the resources are labelled clearly and are accessible to the children who are developing well their independence in using the resources.
- The quality of interactions between the staff and children is consistently good and, on occasions, very good. The adults provide encouragement, model play effectively and ask open-ended questions to develop prediction and extend the children's thinking. The staff incorporate appropriately a range of strategies to support those children who are experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The children are confident in their interactions with the adults and with each other and are developing well their understanding of difference and respect for others.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff have a clear vision for the future development of the playgroup and have worked closely with the management committee to plan the layout of the new premises. Through self-evaluation, the staff have made recent improvements to the book corner and the snack routine which have impacted positively on the children's learning.
- Within the last year, the early years support has been insufficient in addressing the needs of the playgroup. It will be important that the early years specialist works with the staff to support them in developing aspects identified within the report and in the rigorous evaluation of their practice.
- Parents are kept well informed about how to support the children through regular meetings and monthly newsletters. Staff consult regularly with parents and seek their views through, for example, questionnaires and the recent development of a new pre-school logo.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. The playgroup needs, however, to update the staff code of conduct.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Rathkeltair Cross-Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There is an area for improvement that the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is to develop further the planning and provision for outdoor play.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
0	9.30-12.00	0

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	2	1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: *	
Students	1
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

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

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 nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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