

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rhyme Times Playgroup,
Lisburn, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
October 2018



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

Rhyme Times Playgroup is located in Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn. Since the time of the last inspection in 2012, owing to falling enrolment numbers, the playgroup has amalgamated with another playgroup; a new manager and leader have been appointed.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	22
Funded by Department of Education	13
At CoP stages 1 or 2 *	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	54%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	82
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

2. Views of parents and staff

A minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive. In their written comments, the parents expressed their appreciation of the professional, friendly and approachable staff. The questionnaire responses were shared with the 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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children are well-settled and well-behaved. They have good levels of independence as they: choose where they wish to play; follow confidently the established routines, including break and tidy-up time; put on their aprons and self-label their work.

- Most of the children are achieving good and very good standards across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They produce good quality representational artwork and engage in a range of purposeful mark-making opportunities during play. Most of the children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts associated with number, shape, and measures. They sustain purposeful play in The World Around Us as they plan and build collaboratively in the indoor construction area and plant bulbs outdoors.
- Almost all of the children have well-developed fine motor skills as they use with ease a range of tools at the dough, sand and creative areas. A small number of the children did not sustain purposeful play in the outdoor area and a majority did not engage in physical, energetic play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have created a well-organised indoor learning environment which provides good and very good opportunities for learning across almost all areas of the curriculum. There is an appropriate range of natural and commercial resources available to the children, which promotes the development of their independence and stimulates their imagination and creativity.
- The well-embedded routines promote effectively the development of the children's independence, social skills, language and mathematical learning. The transitions around the playroom and from indoor to outdoor play are smooth and well-managed.
- The interactions between the staff and the children are mostly good. The staff are supportive and pastoral; they model play effectively and, on most occasions, build appropriately on the children's responses and interests to develop further their thinking and imagination.
- The cycle of planning, observation and assessment is not sufficiently developed. The staff are piloting a recently introduced revised approach to planning and have identified appropriately the need to make the intended learning more specific and to develop further the link between the observations of the children's learning and future planning. On most occasions, the staff record relevant observations of the children across all areas of learning and use photographs and examples of the children's independent work to support the observations, this however is not always consistent. The observations do not record sufficiently the progress in learning of those children identified with additional learning needs.
- 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 friendly, approachable staff and positive working relationships create a nurturing and supportive environment and develop well the children's level of independence.

7. Leadership and management

- There have been significant changes in and challenges relating to leadership and management over recent years, including: the appointment of a new manager and leader; the appointment of a new early years' adviser; the amalgamation of two previously separate playgroups; and the ongoing planning for the upcoming relocation. These have impeded the development and effectiveness of the use of self-evaluation and strategic planning for improvement which, as a result, is underdeveloped.
- The staff are professional and enthusiastic and work effectively as a team; they are supported in their work by the management committee.
- There are effective links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the playgroup through an informative monthly newsletter and parent noticeboard.

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

Rhyme Times 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 planning, observation and assessment to track progress in learning and meet more effectively the individual needs of all children; and
- to develop a more shared and strategic approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

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.eti.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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