

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Richmount Playgroup,
Portadown, County Armagh

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an inspection in
November 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Quantitative 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on 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 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.
The playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The 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 playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#).

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.

Forty six percent of the parents and all staff members responded to the confidential questionnaire. The results were highly positive; in particular the parents highlighted the rapport which staff have established with the children and the community ethos of the playgroup.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Richmount Playgroup is located in a purpose built facility in Scotch Street area of Portadown. At the time of inspection there were 13 children attending the setting. Both the leader and deputy leader have been in acting roles from September 2016.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important area(s) for improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Important area for improvement
Leadership and management	Important area for improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and independent; they register themselves on arrival, butter crackers for snack and are beginning to make independent choices in their learning. The majority of the children sustain their play within the playroom; however, the choice of play offered and limited outdoor resources make it difficult for children to maintain interest outside.
- The children understand mathematical concepts in number and many use a range of mathematical language about capacity while filling a variety of containers with pulses and grains.
- Almost all of the children have good speech and language skills. They recognise their own symbol but need greater opportunities to see and use their own name in the playroom. A small number of children are interested in, and take care of, the books on display. Their overall interest in early mark-making and representational drawings is under-developed. Most children concentrate at story time and they all engage enthusiastically in the rhyme and song sessions.

6. Provision for learning

- Medium- and short-term planning is organised in a thematic manner, which sets out the role of the adults and the specific language to be developed; however, this planned learning is not always age and stage appropriate. The children's educational programme provides satisfactory or good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff operate a key-worker system and make informative records of the children's learning but they are not making effective use of incidental learning opportunities which arise from the responses of the children.
- The planning and provision for outdoor play is under-developed and transition times do not make for the most effective use of all of the time available for learning. The staff have reviewed the layout of the playroom and endeavour to make the most of the available space. The outdoor area is being developed to include a mud kitchen and growing area but the remaining outdoor play area is not being used well enough to cater for the children's interest in and understanding of The World Around Us and the development of their physical skills.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the playgroup is good. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the working relationships between the staff and the children are good.

7. Leadership and management

- The self-evaluation and development planning is inadequately developed; staff are not sufficiently reflective and are not contributing effectively to development planning. The leader and deputy leader have developed a team approach which has brought about a number of improvements to the provision, particularly in the review of the playroom.

- The early years specialist needs to develop further the capacity of the staff to reflect on practices critically and understand self-evaluation processes in order to promote improvement in the pre-school programme.
- The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the playgroup in a number of ways; such as through the use of social media and an informative monthly newsletter. Good use is made of visitors to the setting to enrich the children's learning.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children which broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. Clear risk assessments need to be completed for all outings undertaken by the playgroup.

8. Overall effectiveness

Richmount Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement which include the need:

- to review the routines and daily transitions to maximise learning opportunities for learning for both indoor and outdoor play across the areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- for the leadership and management to extend and develop self-evaluation and development planning to bring about improvements to the provision.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON RICHMOUNT PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	22
Funded by Department of Education	13
With English as an additional language	#

* On 1 July.

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

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average attendance for the previous year.	94%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am
-	2.5 hours

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	#
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	#

*** Total placements since September of current year

Source: data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

fewer than 5

N/A not available

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