

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Bernadette's Playgroup,
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
November 2014

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

| DESCRIPTOR |
|----------------|
| Outstanding |
| Very Good |
| Good |
| Satisfactory |
| Inadequate |
| Unsatisfactory |

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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's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire or to meet with the inspection team.

No parents responded to the questionnaires. The small number of staff responses indicated they were satisfied with all aspects of their work.

2. Context

The playgroup is accommodated in a dedicated building with an adjoining outdoor area. Since the last inspection, a new leader and a new early years specialist, from the early years organisation, have been appointed. The playgroup operates one part-time morning session; all of the children are in their immediate pre-school year. The lower numbers of funded places and children attending within the last few years has impacted negatively on the running costs and financial viability of the pre-school setting.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

4. Overall findings

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Overall Performance Level | Satisfactory |
| Achievements and Standards | Satisfactory |
| Provision | Satisfactory |
| Leadership and Management | Satisfactory |

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are making satisfactory to good progress in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children are developing well their social skills and are confident as they manage their own personal care, choose activities and follow the daily routines. Most of the children spend sustained periods concentrating on a range of learning activities and showing perseverance at tasks.
- A majority of the children are confident to express their ideas and talk about their own personal experiences and interests. A small number of children have less well developed language and communication skills. The staff need to be consistent in modelling language effectively and in supporting the children's communication skills. A majority of the children have a high level of interest in mark making and enjoy books and stories, both informally through the session and during larger whole group sessions.
- The development of the children's fine motor skills is variable though most of them are making steady progress in their use of the good range of tools such as the brushes and pencils which are available during their play. Most of the children are confident to pedal, climb and balance. These skills need to be planned for in a more progressive way for all of the children to ensure individual support and challenge is provided by the staff where required.
- The children, and in particular the girls, enjoy using paint and the creative materials to experiment with colour, collage and pattern making. A few of them are making simple representations of people and objects in their surroundings. During the inspection, the cafe role-play generated a very good response from the children as they took on roles and played collaboratively and with imagination. In order to develop this area of the curriculum further, the staff should ensure there are sufficient opportunities for three-dimensional model making and that they further develop their planning for music and rhythm, building on their prior experiences of the Musical Pathway programme.
- The children make good use of construction materials indoors to build simple models. They investigate the properties of water with interest as they pour and fill containers but overall need more opportunities to investigate and problem solve. The children's interest in mathematical concepts and their understanding and use of mathematical language needs to be developed further.

6. Provision

- The learning environment is attractively set out to support the children's own choices and decision making. The outdoor resources have been improved to create an inviting outdoor area for play. The effective use of the available area, both indoors and outdoors, to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum needs to be improved. The daily routine is well-managed to provide a good balance between child-centred freely chosen play and appropriate adult-led group activities.

- The staff are all caring and supportive as they engage with the children and often create a sense of fun and enjoyment. They promote purposeful play and, in the best practice, support the children's language and learning effectively. The staff need to exploit the full learning potential of play activities and the daily routines more consistently.
- The staff have worked hard to develop their planning and assessments of the children's progress to provide a broad pre-school programme. This now needs to be built on further to ensure progression in all areas of the curriculum to guide their daily work more fully, and to ensure a good match to the individual children's needs and interests.
- The staff are aware of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; they support them well during the session and liaise appropriately with the parents and other agencies. The staff recognise their need for further training to build their understanding and capacity to address more fully the range of children's additional support needs.
- The quality of the pastoral care is good. There is a welcoming, inclusive and respectful ethos based on excellent working relationships at all levels.
- The children have access to a healthy break and are learning about their dental health. They have regular access to energetic physical activities.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a very strong sense of teamwork and enjoyment among the staff and the leadership and management, focused on the care and best interests of the children and families in the local area.
- The processes for systematic self-evaluation and development planning are at a very early stage of development. The leadership and management would benefit from further training.
- The early years specialist from the early years organisation has provided good support with a relevant focus. She has worked with the staff to bring about improvements within the setting; these need to be built on further and guided by more specific action plans which focus more clearly on the outcomes for the children.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision.

The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The most important areas to be addressed are:

- to ensure there is suitable progression in learning across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum, particularly in the development of early mathematical concepts and language and learning outdoors;
- the need for the staff to exploit the full learning potential of activities and daily routines more consistently in their interactions with the children; and
- the further development of the leadership and management's capacity for effective self evaluation and development planning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-24 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ST BERNADETTE'S PRE-SCHOOL, LONDONDERRY

1. Details of Children

| Total number of children: | am session | pm session |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| attending the pre-school setting | 22 | |
| in their immediate pre-school year | 22 | |
| funded by Department of Education (DE) | 22 | |
| qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2 | 22 | |
| with a statement of special educational needs | 0 | |
| without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs | | |
| with English as an additional language | 0 | |
| who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school | 0 | |

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year. | 78 |
| Number of days open in previous school year | 190 |

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

| Duration of morning session | Duration of afternoon session |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2½ hours | - |

3. Details of Staff

| Number of: | Full-time | Part-time |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Staff, including leader | 3 | |
| Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification | 3 | |
| Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification | | |
| New appointments within previous 12 months | | |

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Students | |
| Trainees | |

*** Total placements since September of current year

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