

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



St Brigid's Playgroup, Mountfield, County Tyrone

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE Ref No (2BB-0593)

Report of an Inspection in May 2019

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1. Context

St Brigid's Playgroup is situated within a classroom in St Brigid's Primary School, in the village of Mountfield, on the outskirts of Omagh. The playgroup has access to outdoor learning experiences within the school grounds. Due to increasing enrolment in the primary school, the playgroup is due to relocate to new premises in the village community hall in September, 2019. The children come mainly from the local area. The staff are new in post since the previous inspection. On the day of the inspection, there was temporary staffing.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	16
Under 3 years of age*	11
Funded by Department of Education	5
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At Cop stages 1 or 2	#
With English as an additional language	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	84%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

fewer than 5

* On 1 July past

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

2. Views of parents and staff

Forty-four percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires and their responses, including a small number of written comments, were all positive about the life and work of the pre-school. They praised highly the caring staff for their support to help the children to develop social skills and a range of learning experiences and highlighted the importance of the playgroup in the local area. A majority of the staff completed the staff questionnaire and all the responses were highly affirming of the work of the staff. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the leadership and a representative of 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 important
Outcomes for learners	Important areas for improvement
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Outcomes in aspects of the curriculum related to personal development and language skills have important areas for improvement. However, all the children make good progress across most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- While the children are independent and confident, they do not show appropriate respect for the resources during the session and by taking responsibility for tidying up after their play activities. The children have good social skills and readily make choices and decisions about their play. They engage well in small groups and in pairs to develop imaginative play. The children are forming friendships and are respectful to one another.
- The children's attention and language skills in whole group story sessions are under-developed. When given the opportunity, by the adults, the children are able to predict what happens next and join in familiar parts of the story. The children's early mark making skills are well-developed. A majority have a good interest in sharing books in small groups and listening to stories read by the adults.
- The children can sort, match and count small amounts during table top games and play activities. They have a very good awareness of size and make comparisons when pouring and filling at the sand tray. Mathematical language during the snack and incidental play is used appropriately by the children.
- The children use confidently a range of fine motor skills to paint, draw, pour and fill containers. In the outdoors, the children have gained good gross motor skills to run, cycle and climb and enjoy energetic play.
- The children are curious and willing to investigate in the beach activity and show an awareness of the variety of sea life in 'the world around us' topic. A majority of the children have a good knowledge of cars and farm machines.

6. Quality of provision

- The quality of the staff interaction is too variable. In the best practice, the staff model appropriate language for the children and build effectively on the children's interests, allow time for the children to think and respond to open-ended questions, and add resources to extend language and learning. In the less effective practice, there were a few missed opportunities by the staff to utilise fully the learning potential in the activities and to promote higher quality language development for the children.
- While the organisation of the day provides lengthy periods of play, the physical play and group story sessions are too short, at this time of the year, to provide the children with sufficient challenge and opportunity to consolidate their language and physical skills. Generally, there are smooth transitions and the children are familiar with the necessary routines. The snack routine provides opportunities for healthy eating and good social skills development; however, there are missed learning opportunities, including for the preparation of the snack.

- The staff have compiled effective long- and medium-term written planning for the six areas of learning. Detailed key worker observations of the children's progress inform aspects of the planning and ensure progression in activities and topics throughout the year. The learning potential inherent in the areas of play is not identified clearly enough and the staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the short-term planning.
- The staff provide a well-presented learning environment using authentic resources and stimulating activities to engage the children's interests across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. An outdoor area extends the learning opportunities for energetic play and for growing and caring for plants and flowers.
- There is an inclusive ethos within the playgroup through which the children with additional language needs are well-integrated in the activities. In the best practice, a staff member, skilfully modelled language for the children and ensured that the individual needs of the children were met to enable them to produce language. Parents are given regular feedback about their children's progress. The staff have identified appropriately the need for ongoing training in special education needs to build staff capacity to meet the specific needs of the children identified with speech and language needs.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a calm and welcoming environment for learning and development and as a result the children are polite to each other and the staff.

7. Leadership and management

- The overall leadership of the playgroup is good. The staff have taken significant action recently to improve the quality of the pre-school programme and provision for the children. In conjunction with the committee, the staff have developed and implemented a wide range of policies and procedures to guide the day-to-day work of the staff with the children. The staff are reflective and the realistic development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement; however, the action plans do not identify clearly enough the specific target areas for improvement. The staff work effectively with the management committee as a team to evaluate and promote continuous improvement in the pre-school programme.
- There have been changes in the early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO). In the past year, there has been a more effective focus on improving provision for the children.
- The representatives of the management committee report very good working relationships with the local primary school and inclusion of parents to support the development of the pre-school programme. The playgroup is actively involved in the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn, 'Big Bedtime Read' and 'Happy, Healthy Kids' programmes. During the inspection a majority of the children were observed readily turning to books and sharing the stories with one another.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance of the relevant departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

St Brigid's Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to review the organisation of the day and make more effective use of all the time and routines for the development of language and learning; and
- to develop further the short-term planning and identify more clearly the learning potential in the areas of play and ensure that the staff interaction is consistently of a higher quality.

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.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 a representative of the management committee;
- a meeting with the early years specialist; 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:

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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