

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colmcille's Pre-school
Playgroup, Belfast

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
January 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

St Colmcille's Pre-school Playgroup is located in a purpose-built facility adjacent to St Joseph's Primary School in east Belfast; almost all of the children come from the local area. The majority of the staff have taken up post in the last year.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	24	24
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
Funded by Department of Education	24	24
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	?	?
With English as an additional language	0	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	86%
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirteen percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Almost all of the responses were positive; there were no written comments. The responses were shared with the leader and a member 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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are settled, follow the routines of the day and achieve very well across all areas of learning. Their personal, social and emotional skills are a strength. Almost all of the children engage in sustained, collaborative play and are able to take turns and share. They make independent choices for play, help prepare the snack and assist at tidy up time. In the outdoor play, the children develop their independence, turn-taking and self-management skills through their participation in a range of physical, energetic play activities and they create, explore and investigate using the wide range of authentic resources.
- The children communicate effectively with each other and request support from adults, when required, using a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas. They listen very attentively at story time; participate enthusiastically in songs and use their imagination in drama and role play scenarios. The children enjoy the wide range of mark making opportunities and produce detailed representational drawings.
- The children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts, such as number, shape and measures and use mathematical language confidently during the range of carefully planned activities and the routines of the day.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning respond positively to the strategies deployed and targets set by the staff; they are making good progress in line with their ability.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have created a stimulating, attractive environment and provide very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum both indoors and outdoors, which is enhanced with the display of the children's creative work. The wide range of resources are carefully managed and organised in order to promote independence.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children to promote learning and language is good. The staff listen carefully to the children, model language and ask appropriate questions to extend their thinking. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted by all staff and the encouraging manner they display enhances the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The long-, medium- and short-term planning guides well the work of the staff and is informed by regular observations. The learning opportunities provided by the staff are enhanced by regular external visits and visitors to the setting.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on all aspects of the children's learning and well-being. The calm, relaxed atmosphere and the pastoral engagement of the staff creates a positive learning environment for the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff in each playroom work collaboratively, have a clear vision for the development of the pre-school and are further enhancing the teamwork approach across the setting.
- The committee are fully aware of their responsibility and are supportive of the staff in their work. An independent early years' specialist, who also coordinates the pre-school setting, provides effective support and guidance to the staff. The pre-school's approach to development planning and self-evaluation is informed appropriately by staff and parent consultation.
- The pre-school has established very good links with parents and the main feeder primary schools for the benefit of the children. Information about the children's progress and development is gathered regularly and is shared with the parents at key times throughout the year. The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the setting through the regular newsletter and are provided with a range of opportunities to support their child's learning through, for example, The Big Bedtime Read and Happy Healthy Kids.

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

St Colmcille's Pre-school Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children.

The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

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 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 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 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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