

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



St Joseph's Community Playgroup, Galliagh, County Derry

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (2AB-0045)

Report of an Inspection in February 2019

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1. Context

St Joseph's Playgroup is located in purpose-built accommodation which includes a secure outdoor area. It is located within the church grounds of St Joseph's, Galliagh. The children attending the playgroup come from the local and wider catchment area.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	16
Funded by Department of Education	16
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	79
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

A majority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were extremely positive about the life and work of the playgroup. The written comments from the parents indicated that the children are very happy in the playgroup; the staff are friendly and welcoming and provide regular updates on the children's progress. A small number of staff comments highlighted their commitment to delivering a child-centred approach. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and the Independent Early Years Specialist.

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	Very good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are developing very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning. They respond enthusiastically to spontaneous play opportunities and take risks to extend their learning, for example, through problem solving and investigative play with snow and ice. Almost all of the children explore their learning environment with curiosity and enthusiasm; supported skilfully by the staff, they use their senses to investigate, make predictions about and describe the different properties of natural and man-made materials.
- The children's personal, social and emotional development is a key strength; they share, have good levels of co-operation and show respect, kindness and consideration for each other. Almost all of the children are well settled. They engage in purposeful play for sustained periods of time, especially in the construction area, sand and home corner, and they engage confidently in conversations with their peers and with the adults. Most of the children have good levels of independence as they: choose where they wish to play; access resources to further extend their play; and, develop their social skills by participating in the well-developed snack routine. A small number of children do not actively participate in the tidy up routine sorting and putting away resources, and require adult support to put on their coats.
- Playing in role in the home corner is very well developed; the children use real cooking utensils, confidently cutting and mixing fruit and vegetables. Nearly all of the children have very well-developed fine motor skills; they ably use a wide range of authentic tools, for example, hammers, screws, pins, nails, keys and locks. The children enjoy experimenting with different textures and create high quality models and paintings of which they are very proud.
- Most of the children are developing well their understanding of mathematical language and concepts and were observed making patterns, sequencing and measuring each other on a height chart.
- The small number of children who require support with aspects of their learning are making good progress and are well integrated into the group.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff have created an attractive well organised learning environment making good use of the available space. Good opportunities are provided for the children to move around the playroom freely and access a wide range of commercial, natural and authentic resources that develop further their creativity and investigative play.
- Although the staff know the children very well and record regular observations and assessments, these are not being used consistently to track individual progress, and inform the short-term planning. The staff have identified the need to develop this further.
- Outdoor planning opportunities for energetic play and the development of the children's gross motor skills are underdeveloped. The organisation of the day provides for a lengthy period of free play, however insufficient time is allocated for the whole group story and rhymes.

- The staff interactions with the children range from good to very good; on many occasions the staff skilfully exploit the learning potential that incidentally arises across the play areas and respond well to the children's interests and needs. All of the staff engage positively with the children and listen attentively; most model language effectively and ask open-ended questions to extend the children's thinking skills. The children are given appropriate time to process information, answer questions and follow instructions, which most can do very well.
- The children who have additional learning needs are identified appropriately through information gathered by staff observations, parents and other professionals; however, the planning of targets and actions to meet the children's needs is not specific enough.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the children's learning. The caring, nurturing ethos supports well the children's self-esteem and promotes successfully the children's enthusiasm and curiosity in their learning.

7. Leadership and management

- There are important areas for improvement in leadership and management. The current three-year development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, however, the supportive action planning process is not in place. The procedures for self-evaluation are underdeveloped.
- The experienced staff work well collegially; they share a commitment to providing high quality provision and ensuring that the children achieve very good outcomes for learning.
- Good support is provided by the Independent Early Years Specialist and the management committee.
- There are very good links with the parents. They value and support well the range of initiatives, in particular, those provided through the 'Getting Ready to Learn' strategy such as the 'Big Bedtime Read' which has impacted positively on the children's interest in books and parental engagement. The playgroup has well established links with feeder primary schools and the local SureStart to ensure smooth transitions for the children.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments.

However, St Joseph's Community Playgroup needs to:

- update the Child Protection Policy to reflect more fully current guidance from the Department of Education; and
- put in place appropriate procedures for recording whether or not there have been any safeguarding allegations against members of staff.

9. Overall effectiveness

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

The areas for improvement are to:

- use the observations and assessments of the children's learning to track individual progress, and to inform the short-term planning;
- improve the planning and provision for outdoor play; and
- develop a systematic approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement to inform the development planning process and monitor the impact on the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children.

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 those involved with leadership; 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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