

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



St Mary's Pre-School Centre, Strabane, County Tyrone

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE Ref No: 2BB-0346

Report of an Inspection in November 2019

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1. Context

St Mary's Pre-School Centre operates within the premises of St Mary's Primary School in Cloughcor, Ballymagorry, near Strabane, County Tyrone. All of the children are in their pre-school year. The pre-school was last inspected in April 2014 and since then there have been changes in staff and leadership.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	23
Funded by Department of Education	23
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	11

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	89%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

** 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 small number of the parents responded to the questionnaires and their responses were positive about the life and work of the pre-school. The small number of written comments highlighted: how well the child has settled in; the progress the child is making in the pre-school. All the staff and management responded positively and affirmed their support to help the children to learn. A summary of the questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from 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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are making very good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; they are keen to explore the interesting range of natural resources in the home corner to enhance their play experience. The children are interested in books and they enjoy stories and join in singing songs and rhymes with actions. Most of the children listen well and respond confidently to the adults. The children's early mark making and creativity during art and craft is underdeveloped.
- The children's social skills are developing well; they collaborate during their role-play and are developing friendships. The children self-register independently on arrival and manage their own personal care and the informal snack routine with confidence. Most of the children settle well to purposeful play and maintain good attention and concentration.
- The children's early understanding of mathematical concepts and language is developing well. During the inspection, the children matched, sorted, counted and measured and used mathematical language confidently during activities.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are integrated very well into the pre-school and are making good progress. They are encouraged to think about their emotions, self-regulate and find a resolution to problems.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff plan a good quality programme for play across almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. A majority of the staff interactions are of good quality to support productive play, model language, support the children's social skills and manage well the whole group activities and the transitions between activities. The medium and short-term planning guides the staff in their interactions with the children however are not sufficiently detailed and focussed on the learning for the children. Consequently there were a few missed opportunities by the staff to build further on the children's learning and provide additional challenge. The staff have appropriately identified the need to develop further the long-term planning and planning for outdoor play and have begun to address this aspect of the provision.
- The staff provide a caring, supportive and inclusive learning environment. There is a good range of natural and authentic resources which are well organised and accessible for the children. In best practice, observations are informing short-term planning and progression of the children's learning; however this is not yet consistent.
- The children who require additional support with their learning are identified early and individual education plans are in place. The targets on the plans do not reflect fully the range of strategies used by the staff and are not monitored sufficiently to identify the progress that the children are making.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The staff's caring and supportive approach promotes the children's personal and social development encouraging them to develop their emotions and self-regulation.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work well as a collaborative team; they are clear about the strengths and areas requiring improvement within the setting and are using self-evaluation methods to identify priorities. The use of self-evaluation requires further development in order to measure the impact of improvement on quality of provision and outcomes for learners across all areas of the curriculum.
- The pre-school, with support from the management committee and guidance of the EYO, has a three year development plan in place with appropriate action plans that identify areas for improvement.
- The pre-school has good links with the parents and is actively involved in the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn initiative: 'Big Bedtime Read' and 'Happy, Healthy Kids' programmes. They have also recently enrolled in the 'Rural Respecting Differences' programme which will link them with a cross border/community pre-school next year. The very good links with the local primary school to which the majority of the children transfer enables smooth transitions into year one.

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 Mary's Pre-School Centre needs to:
 - ensure Risk Assessments are more specific and detailed for educational trips and outings.
 - update a small number of policies to reflect more fully the current practice.

9. Overall effectiveness

St Mary's Pre-School Centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There are areas for improvement that the pre-school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to develop further the use of self-evaluation to measure the impact of improvement on quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- to continue to review and revise the planning for indoor and outdoor to ensure progression in all areas of learning.

The ETI will monitor how the pre-school 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 representatives of 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 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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