

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Stepping Stones Creche,
Portstewart, County Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

| Section | Page |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Context | 1 |
| 2. Views of parents and staff | 1 |
| 3. Focus of the inspection | 1 |
| 4. Overall findings of the inspection | 2 |
| 5. Outcomes for learners | 2 |
| 6. Quality of provision | 2 |
| 7. Leadership and management | 3 |
| 8. Safeguarding | 3 |
| 9. Overall effectiveness | 3 |

Appendices

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Stepping Stones Crèche is located on Church Street in the town of Portstewart, County Londonderry. The provision re-located from premises in the grounds of Coleraine University campus in August 2016 and the new location has undergone significant refurbishment. Several staff changes occurred at this time.

| Number of children: | Class 1 |
|---|---------|
| Attending part-time | 10 |
| Under 3 years of age* | 11 |
| Funded by Department of Education | 10 |
| With statement of special educational needs | # |
| 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 | # |
| Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school | # |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Average percentage attendance for the previous year. | 95% |
| Number of days open in previous school year | 189 |

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

2. Views of parents and staff

The majority of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were almost all highly positive about the life and work of the crèche. In particular staff appreciate the welcoming, inclusive atmosphere and how well the crèche is led and managed. No parents responded to the questionnaire.

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 | Very good |

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are well settled for the time of year and their levels of independence are well developed; they engage confidently with the adults and with each other, and, when asked, are happy to talk about their work. The children are familiar with the daily routines of the crèche; they manage break and transitions independently and well. Almost all of the children play collaboratively with each other for sustained periods of time.
- The children are making good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; their early mark making is of a high standard and is integrated naturally into many areas of play. The children's early understanding of mathematical concepts is developing well, and they use the associated language of number, shape and size confidently throughout the day.
- The children participate enthusiastically and enjoy daily music sessions, they sing a wide range of songs and rhymes and incorporate creative movement and dance work well in pairs and small groups.

6. Quality of provision

- The indoor learning environment is attractive, spacious and well-resourced and enables the children to access materials independently for play. The provision for developing the children's gross motor skills in the restricted outdoor area is limited, however the shared open space within the building is used effectively for energetic play. Within the limited space available, the staff present an appealing, creative outdoor science learning environment to develop well the children's interest in nature and the world around us.
- The majority of the interactions between the staff and the children are good or very good quality and the staff engage well with the children during all play activities. While, in a majority of the practice, the staff use effective open-ended questioning to extend further the children's thinking and oracy, the best practice is not consistent.
- The staff plan a varied programme throughout the year which ensures progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and maximises the use of the local environment and community. The staff have identified appropriately the need to review the cycle of observation, recording and assessment in order to link the observations and assessment more explicitly to future planning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the crèche's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on all aspects of their learning, and development. The children are well behaved and they work and play confidently in a respectful, positive climate.

7. Leadership and management

- The crèche has gone through a period of considerable change during which there has been a sustained and effective focus by leadership and management on developing quality learning opportunities for the children in the new environment.
- There is an effective, systematic approach to self-evaluation which identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and focuses well on the outcomes for the children.
- Effective links have been developed with appropriate support agencies, and effective new links are being forged with local primary schools and the local community.
- The management group are well informed and provide constructive support and appropriate challenge for the crèche. The crèche is supported by an early years specialist who provides effective advice, guidance and support for all aspects of staff development.

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

Stepping Stones crèche demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children. The area for improvement which the crèche has the capacity to address is to link the information gathered through observations more directly to planning.

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. |

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk