

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Straidarran Community Playgroup, Claudy, County Londonderry

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE ref no (2AB-0036)

Report of an Inspection in April 2019



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

Straidarran Community Playgroup is situated in a community hall in the townland of Straidarran near Claudy in County Londonderry. The playgroup has sole use of the building comprised of spacious indoor areas and access to a small outdoor area. The children come mainly from the local area. There are two new staff members and the leader and deputy are in post since the previous inspection.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	17
Funded by Department of Education	17
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At Cop stages 1 or 2	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	12%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	93%
Number of days open in previous school year	180

Source: data provided by the setting.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-nine percent of the parents and all of the staff 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. The parents praised highly the caring staff for their support in helping the children to settle well and enjoy learning and the value of the playgroup in the local community. The staff highlighted the good working relationships and child-centred provision within the pre-school.

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 to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are happy and relate very well to the staff and one another; they are forming friendships and engage in sustained collaborative play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They are friendly, confident and independent and have high levels of self-regulation; particularly during transitions where they take responsibility for the care of the resources.
- The children's language and communication is a key strength and their listening and attention skills are very well-developed. The children readily initiate conversations and are able to offer ideas and ask questions. They enjoy listening to stories and join in the familiar parts, and their singing, rhythm and rhymes skills are progressing well in line with their individual stages of development. Early mark making, recognition of symbols and representational drawing skills are appropriately well-developed in the final term of the pre-school year.
- The children's awareness of shape and space is evident through their safe use of space in the outdoor area and in jigsaw activities. Mathematical language and concepts are applied effectively within meaningful play contexts and tidying routines.
- The children have excellent fine and gross motor skills and are confident to climb, jump, balance, cycle and run freely. Increasingly, the children talk about keeping themselves safe and also take responsibility for the care of a range of flowers and vegetables in the outdoors. They are imaginative in role play, construction and home corner activities and willing to problem-solve and find solutions to simple problems in the sand tray.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a well-resourced, spacious learning environment and activities to engage the children's interests and sensory learning experiences. They make effective use of the outdoor area to promote the energetic use of wheeled toys and the development of gross motor climbing and balancing skills; however, they are restricted by the layout and size of the area in developing more challenging and adventurous physical play. The organisation of the day is well-structured to provide for lengthy periods of freely chosen play. There are smooth transitions at key times in the programme and the children are familiar with the necessary routines.
- Significant attention is given to the voice of the child in planning the pre-school programme. The detailed planning outlines clearly the intended learning opportunities and is effectively implemented through the provision of a rich and stimulating range of experiences for the children. The planning takes account of the individual developmental needs of the children and the staff use their observations and assessments to show progression in learning and inform future planning.
- The caring and supportive role of the staff with the children and the very good quality of adult interactions extend the children's language and thinking and develops further their learning. A key strength of the interaction is the ability of the staff to promote language and learning through incidental play opportunities and build on the children's personal experiences and interests.

- The staff maintain contact with the parents about the progress in speech therapy for a small number of children who have been identified with additional needs in language. They have identified appropriately the need to develop further the children's individual education plans which are not focused sharply enough on target-setting with specific tailored strategies for individual 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 impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The child-centred approach is promoted effectively through the children's personal and social development resulting in positive relationships among the children and between the children and the adults.

7. Leadership and management

- The well-established leadership of the playgroup has created a climate of self-reflection, effective teamwork and commitment to improvement. There is a child-centred vision set out in a three-year development plan which is well-informed by the children's needs and interests and through consultation with parents and the management committee. The staff effectively engage parents through newsletters, open days and progress meetings. The impact of the actions taken by the staff and committee has enhanced significantly, the quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environment and the provision for learning.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) provides very good support, advice and guidance for the development of the pre-school programme and maintains a clear focus on learning which informs the self-evaluation and action planning for improvement processes.
- The staff make effective use of self-evaluation, gathering a range of evidence to inform their development planning process. The EYS and the staff have identified appropriately the need for the staff to access further professional development for special needs. At the time of the inspection, the links with the speech and language therapy service are under-developed. The staff were not part of a previous training initiative for Capacity Building for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and have had limited access to training to support children with additional needs beyond that provided in the EYO clusters.
- There are effective links with several primary schools and the staff share relevant curricular information with the teachers before the children transfer to year one. Parents are actively involved by the staff in the 'Big Bedtime Read' the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn programmes and the children show a very good interest in books.

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, the playgroup needs to:

- review the risk assessment procedures so that they are more comprehensive.

9. Overall effectiveness

Straidarran Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. 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.eti.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:

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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