

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Sunshine Playgroup, Belfast

Report of an inspection in  
October 2016



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



## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on 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 nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#).

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.

A minority of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision.

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children<sup>1</sup>, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## 3. Context

Sunshine Playgroup is located within Currie Primary School in North Belfast. The playgroup provides a part time session for twenty-four children and has recently been refurbished to a very high standard.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of a Day Nursery this refers only to the DE-funded pre-school provision.

## **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children have settled very well into the playgroup. They are becoming familiar with the daily routines and organisation of the day and are developing well their independence, particularly during the snack routine. The majority approach the staff readily and are confident when talking about their play and sharing personal experiences. A minority are too dependent on the staff taking the lead in choosing their activities, rather than developing their independence.
- The children work well with each other and can engage in sustained and purposeful play. Some of the art work on display shows close attention to detail and is representational of their personal life. In their imaginative role-play the children use the available resources to act out real-life scenarios that build on their own personal experiences and learning.
- Most of the children have good speech and oral language skills; they listen attentively and can follow basic instructions. The staff have identified children with specific language or other needs and have taken appropriate steps to address these.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The staff are caring and supportive in most of their interactions with the children; at times during the inspection, the planned play experiences were directed unduly by the staff which limited the children's free choice, play, and creativity. The staff know the children well and have made a useful start in building evidence, including photographic, to support their findings. Many of the written observations to date are linked in a structured way to the completion of specific tasks but are not capturing significant responses as they occur naturally in the children's play. The staff need to develop a less formal method of record keeping and link this information more effectively to planning. The inspection evidence confirms that it is appropriate that the written planning and methods of observation have been identified by the staff and the early years specialist as areas for further development.
- The staff provide a varied programme for the children throughout the year and have secured additional funding to develop further the outdoor garden area and the world around us area of the curriculum.
- The recently refurbished playgroup is very attractively presented and very good use is made of all available indoor space. The later part of the daily timetable does not provide a long enough period of free play, nor sufficient choice of activities for the children; both aspects need to be reviewed.
- The children in the group who require additional support with their learning are identified at an early stage. Appropriate specialist support is sought and currently in place to meet individual needs. The individual education plans for these children are of a high standard.

- The quality of pastoral care is very good. There is a caring, friendly ethos in a secure environment where working relationships between the staff, children and their parents are very good.
- The playgroup promotes healthy eating and allocates appropriate time for energetic physical activity.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The staff work well as a team and have developed very effective links with the parents, the main feeder primary school and appropriate agencies for the benefit of the children.
- The management group have been instrumental in driving forward the improvement agenda for the playgroup and are very support of the staff in their work.
- The staff are reflective in their work and have identified appropriate areas for development, however, the formal process of self-evaluation is not sufficiently well developed to inform planning.
- The staff reported that they have had several changes in early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation in recent years. The current early years specialist has worked very closely with the staff in the last year to help bring about the improvements in the provision to date, however she is due to leave the organisation in the near future which will cause discontinuity in necessary support and development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Sunshine Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement in developing further the planning of activities and the methods of observation and record keeping.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SUNSHINE PLAYGROUP

1. Details of children

<b>Number of children:</b>	
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#
With English as an additional language	#

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

\*\*\* Denotes a number less than 5.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	67%
Average attendance for the previous year.	87%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

2. Duration of sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
9.00-12.00		

3. Details of staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1	

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	5
Trainees	0

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

**Source:** data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

# fewer than 5

N/A not available

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