

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



The Dry Arch Children's Centre, Dungiven, County Londonderry

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE Ref No: 2AB-0047

Report of an Inspection in November 2019

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1. Context

The Dry Arch Children's Pre-school Centre is situated in purpose built accommodation within the Dry Arch Children's Centre on the outskirts of Dungiven, County Londonderry. All of the children are in their pre-school year. The playgroup was last inspected in March 2014 and since then there have been changes to the staff and management committee.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	12
Funded by Department of Education	12
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At Cop stages 1 or 2	0

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	188

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. 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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Important areas for improvement
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children's learning and development in early mathematics is an important area for improvement. While a small number of children were observed engaging in incidental counting, the children's use of early mathematical language is very limited and it is not integrated naturally within play or sufficiently developed for the time of year.
- The children have good social skills and readily make choices and decisions about their play. They engage well in small groups and in pairs to play collaboratively. While a small number of the children engage in role-play, for example, using stop and go signs in the bus station, the children's creativity and imagination is under developed.
- The children are familiar with the daily routines of the pre-school and almost all have good levels of independence; accessing resources for their play, putting on coats and wellington boots and self-managing the snack routine.
- The children's behaviour is very good and they respond well to the rules of the pre-school. The children ask questions confidently and share ideas relating to their play throughout the day. They listen and interact confidently with the staff and are encouraged to use their language to resolve conflicts during play. A small number of children engaged in songs and rhymes during their play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff do not have a sufficiently developed shared understanding of the pre-school curriculum. Consequently, while the staff engage warmly with the children, their interactions are brief and there are too many missed opportunities to extend the children's language and learning through play. The staff do not model play sufficiently to develop the children's imagination and curiosity and to progress and challenge their learning.
- The long-term written planning is not sufficiently detailed to ensure clear progression in learning across the pre-school year. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the short-term planning. The current planning does not identify clearly enough the learning potential inherent in the areas of play in order to guide effectively the learning, teaching and assessment. Planning for early mathematical experiences is underdeveloped and there is a lack of progression in the use of mathematical language, concepts and problem solving.
- The cycle of observation and planning is an area for improvement. While the staff meet regularly to review the children's learning and are beginning to record relevant observations of the children and use these to inform the short-term planning, this needs to be developed further.
- There is a bright, welcoming learning environment in the playroom with a good range of real and natural resources. The resources are well-organised for the children to access them independently. The staff are consistent in the promotion of positive behaviour messages and encourage the children to express their feelings and to be aware of the impact of their actions on others.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a calm and welcoming environment for learning and development and as a result the children are polite to each other and the staff.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and staff's understanding and use of development planning and self-evaluation is underdeveloped. The newly-established staff team work well together and are supported in their work by the management committee. They are aware of their strengths, have identified some appropriate areas for improvement and are keen to embrace change leading to better outcomes for the children and improved provision. The management group have high expectations for the pre-school. The Early Years Specialist provides effective guidance and support for improvement.
- The staff have developed good links between the parents, adjoining primary schools and the local Sure Start. The links with Sure Start are well-established and ensure that the parents and children can be supported by Speech and Language Therapists and the Health Visitor. The pre-school is actively involved in the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn, 'Big Bedtime Read' and 'Happy, Healthy Kids' programmes.

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 Dry Arch Children's Pre-school Centre needs to:
 - update a small number of policies to reflect more fully current practice within the playgroup; and
 - ensure Risk Assessment are more robust.

9. Overall effectiveness

The Dry Arch Children's Pre-school Centre needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to develop:

- the children's use of mathematical language and problem solving skills;
- the staff's knowledge and understanding of the pre-school curriculum to plan for progression for learning for all the children;
- the staff's understanding and use of development planning and self-evaluation processes leading to improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

The ETI will monitor and report on the pre-school'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.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 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 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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