

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Dry Arch Children's Centre,
Dungiven

Report of an inspection in
March 2014

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	13	5	38% ¹	*
Staff	*	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

All of the parents and staff who responded were positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup.

2. Context

Dry Arch Children's Centre Playgroup is situated in purpose built accommodation within the Dry Arch Children's Centre on the outskirts of Dungiven, County Derry. All of the children are in their immediate pre-school year. The playgroup was last inspected in 2004 and since then a new leader and assistant have been appointed.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

¹ The ETI is trialling a new range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage of questionnaires returned may be low.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children are well-settled for the time of year; they are interested and well-motivated in their learning. Almost all of the children engage in concentrated, purposeful play for sustained periods of time. They have very good levels of independence and make choices about the activities they engage in and the materials they use.
- They play collaboratively, share materials and take turns readily; their social skills are developing very well and their behaviour is exemplary.
- At whole-group story time, all of the children listen attentively and respond well to the adults. They independently access the wide range of books available throughout the playroom and make very good use of the mark making and early writing opportunities available in the play areas. Almost all of the children use mathematical language with confidence; they count, recognise colours and use prepositional language appropriately during play.

6 Provision

- The staff work hard to provide an attractive, well-organised learning environment and appropriate use is being made of all available space in the playroom and the outdoor area. The staff value and celebrate well the children's work in displays around the room. The daily snack and other necessary routines are well-organised and provide very good opportunities for the children to continue to develop their independence, social and conversational skills.
- The staff interactions with the children are consistently of a high quality. The staff model good play and develop the children's language and thinking through sustained discussions and open-ended questions.
- Overall the children's educational programme is well-balanced with very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. A particular strength of the provision is the development of early mathematical concepts and language.

- The staff have developed a rigorous approach to planning, to observing the children at play and to recording their responses. The staff use the children's responses and appropriate photographic evidence very effectively to inform future planning, to respond to the children's interests and to assess the children's progress in their learning. In particular, the planning to provide support for children that need additional assistance with aspects of their learning, guides the work of the staff very well.
- The provision for pastoral care is excellent. There is an inclusive, calm and welcoming ethos; the staff treat all of the children with care and respect, and there are very good working relationships between the staff and the children. The children are secure and relaxed with the adults and turn to them easily for help and support.
- Very good attention is given to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of a healthy snack and regular opportunities for energetic physical activity outdoors.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff work very effectively as a team to meet the needs of all the children and to promote improvements within the playgroup. They have made a good start to the process of self-evaluation and development planning, have appropriately identified areas for improvement within the playgroup's provision, and have clear action plans in place to guide the further development of their work.
- The staff of the playgroup work very closely with the management of the Dry Arch Children's Centre to ensure continuity of provision and to ease transitions for the children at the beginning and end of the session.
- The playgroup staff have received very good support from the early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation. In particular the staff and early years specialist have worked together to improve the processes of planning, observation and assessment of the children's learning including the planning and provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.
- The playgroup has very good pastoral links with the local primary schools to provide a smooth transition for the children. The staff has developed very good and effective links with the parents. Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress and they are informed about aspects of the provision and the work of the playgroup through a regular, informative newsletter. The playgroup has good links with the local community and makes effective use of outside agencies in order to improve the learning experiences and to meet the support needs of the children.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	The Dry Arch Children's Centre
Address:	Glenshane Business Park 50 Legavallon Road DUNGIVEN Co Londonderry BT47 4QL
Management Type:	Committee

Date of inspection:	12 March 2014
Date of previous inspection:	16 January 2006

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	13	
in their immediate pre-school year	13	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	13	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	13	
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	
with English as an additional language	0	
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	
Attendance:		
attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	83.66%	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
2½ hours	-	188

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