

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Old Station Playgroup,
Dromore, County Down

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
February 2018



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

The Old Station Playgroup is located within The Old Station Day Care Nursery on the outskirts of Dromore, County Down. Since the last inspection in 2010, a new leader, deputy leader and two assistants have been appointed. At the time of the inspection, the deputy leader was acting leader on a temporary basis.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	20
Funded by Department of Education	20
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	60.64
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

2. Views of parents and staff

A minority of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were very positive about almost all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The written comments commended the professional and caring staff who work closely with parents to progress the children's learning. All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive. In their written comments, they highlighted the safe and welcoming learning environment which has been created through effective teamwork.

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 for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children are very settled and happy in the playgroup. They are highly motivated and almost all play collaboratively and purposefully for sustained periods of time. The children show high levels of independence in accessing resources to enhance their play and during snack and tidy-up time.
- The children are naturally curious and use all of their senses to explore the indoor and outdoor learning environment. They use mathematical language confidently and appropriately across all areas of play. During the inspection, the children were observed counting, matching, creating and describing two dimensional structures and using the language of measure and time.
- The children are articulate and express their ideas readily to each other and to the adults. Their love of books is evident and the children share books and stories with each other in the attractive book corner. The children label their own work and engage enthusiastically in mark making. Of particular note is the children's artwork which is detailed and perceptive. The children have a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes and use the musical instruments to join in planned and spontaneous music making.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning are making good progress in all aspects of the curriculum.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a well-balanced programme with very good opportunities for the children to develop and extend their learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They make best use of the limited space to create a highly stimulating and well-organised learning environment which is resourced with a wide range of authentic and natural resources.
- The high quality interactions between the staff and the children are a key strength of the provision. All staff use commentary and model language very well. Through open-ended questions they build effectively on the children's interests, extend their thinking and encourage them to predict and investigate.
- The planning is detailed, takes account of the children's interests and guides the staff very well. The staff maintain regular observations of the children's learning experiences across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Observations of the children's physical skills are used very well to inform future planning. However, observations of the children's learning across other areas of the curriculum need to inform better future planning.
- The children who have additional learning needs are identified early and benefit from the effective strategies, used consistently by all staff, to support their physical, social and emotional needs. While the individual education plans are reviewed regularly and reflect the children's strengths and areas of development, the targets do not identify clearly enough the progression of the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The calm and relaxed environment and positive working relationships at all levels contributes to the well-being of the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership of the pre-school is very good. The staff team have a clear vision for the future development of the playgroup and work collegially in the best interest of the children. The staff are knowledgeable and place importance on professional development. An independent early years' specialist provides very good support to the playgroup.
- The staff are embedding well a culture of self-evaluation. The development plan is well-constructed and priorities have been identified through an evaluation of current practice. Recent work on developing the outdoor provision has impacted positively on the outcomes for children, particularly in physical, mathematical and World Around Us provision. The increased focus on developing the music provision has enabled the children to have a better understanding of rhythm, recall and syllabification.
- Effective links have been developed with local pre-school settings which is developing staff practice and self-evaluation.

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 Old Station Playgroup needs to:

- update the staff code of conduct; and
- access refresher training for the proprietor.

9. Overall effectiveness

The Old Station Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children.

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; 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.

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