

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Tiny Tots Playgroup, Strathfoyle, County Londonderry

Voluntary pre-school playgroup DE Ref No: 2AB-0620

Report of an Inspection in February 2020



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1. Context

Tiny Tots playgroup is situated in purpose built accommodation in the village of Strathfoyle, County Londonderry. A minority of the children are in their pre-school year. This is the first inspection of the playgroup. There have been changes in the leadership and management committee and key roles are currently being fulfilled in a temporary capacity.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	5
Funded by Department of Education	5

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	5
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	N/A

Source: data provided by the setting.

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

All of the parents responded to the questionnaires and their responses were positive about the life and work of the pre-school. In written comments the parents highlighted: the warm, friendly, and stimulating environment; caring staff; and good communication with the parents. 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	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are making good progress across most aspects of their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary 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.

- Nearly all of the children are well-settled and engage in long periods of purposeful play. They engage confidently and play collaboratively with each other. The children are familiar with daily routines; however transitions are lengthy and too formal. Almost all of the children have good levels of independence; accessing resources for their play, putting on coats and self-managing the snack routine.
- Most of the children understand, and at times use, mathematical language associated with shape, colour, capacity and comparison of size during their play. They do not explore concepts of time and pattern to the same extent.
- During the inspection, most of the children listened attentively and enjoyed stories read by the adults; they joined in rhymes and played musical instruments. While a small number of the children engage in role-play, for example, cutting up vegetables in the house corner, the children's creativity and imagination is under-developed.
- The children's fine motor skills are developing; they use real cutlery and authentic craft materials with increasing confidence. A majority of children accessed the indoor gym area and continued developing their gross motor skills using the balancing beams and chasing bubbles during outdoor play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff do not have a sufficiently developed shared understanding of all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The short-, medium- and long-term written planning for the pre-school year requires further development to identify adequate progression and challenge across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. There is no planning for outdoor play in place. 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 is not yet sufficiently developed.
- While most of the staff engage warmly with the children and support well their social skills, the quality of the interactions is variable and there are missed opportunities to extend the children's language and learning through play.
- There is a bright, welcoming and well-organised learning environment in the playroom with a good range of authentic and natural resources which the children access independently. The staff are consistent in the promotion of positive behaviour messages; they 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 on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a calm and welcoming environment for learning and development and as a result the children are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and staff's understanding and use of development planning and self-evaluation is under-developed. The action plans do not include sufficiently focused targets and detail to guide effectively the staff in promoting improvement and measuring the impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for the children.
- The newly-established staff team work well together and are supported in their work by the management committee who recognise the current challenges within the setting. They are aware of their strengths and have identified some appropriate areas for improvement. The Early Years Specialist provides effective guidance and support for improvement.
- The staff have developed strong, positive links with the parents, with nursery schools, primary schools and the local community partnership. Parents and visitors to the setting and external outings to the local library enrich the children's learning experiences. The staff have identified the need to further develop the children's language with the support of their parents at home and as a result, the playgroup is actively involved in the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn initiative 'Big Bedtime Read'.

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, Tiny Tots Playgroup needs to:
 - update a small number of policies to reflect more fully current practice within the playgroup and;
 - ensure aspects of Child Protection Policy are updated to reflect the most recent guidance from the Department of Education.

9. Overall effectiveness

Tiny Tots Playgroup needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the children's outcomes and learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- to improve the quality of the adult interactions and provide high quality learning experiences and progression in learning for all of the children; and
- develop 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.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, 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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