

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Tiny Tots Pre-school ,
Toomebridge, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an inspection in
March 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Health and safety
- B. Information on sessions and staff
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Name Tiny Tots Pre-school is a well established community playgroup based in a mobile unit in the grounds of Duneane Parish Centre in Toome. The children attending the pre-school come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a new leader and deputy leader have been appointed. At the time of the inspection approximately one-third of the children attending were in their penultimate pre-school year.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	14
Attending part-time	8
Under 3 years of age*	#
Funded by Department of Education	14

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	189

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

** 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 confidential questionnaire and were very positive about the provision, praising the work of the caring staff. The responses from the staff indicated a team approach and a willingness to learn and improve their work further.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are settled and almost all are well-focused on their learning during indoor play. They have very good social skills and co-operate willingly with the staff and one another, during their play, daily routines and group activities in the large hall. Their learning is less well developed during outdoor physical play session.
- Most of the children are developing good language and communication skills, using an increasing vocabulary as they hold sustained conversations both with the staff and one another. A majority are becoming aware of print as they register themselves, label their own work, experiment with writing during role play and enjoy books and stories. The engagement of a small group of boys in any form of communication is generally less well developed.
- The children sort, match and explore pattern and shape as a natural part of their play. They show a good understanding of positional language, number and counting as they participate in a wide range of movement songs and rhymes.
- The children spend sustained periods playing imaginatively, acting out family roles during home play. They use the art materials to explore colour and use a range of tools with increasing confidence to apply paint and develop simple collages. A small number of children are beginning to make simple representations in their drawing and paintings.
- Most of the children are well co-ordinated and have good control of their body movements as they participate enthusiastically during music and movement sessions. They are curious and use their senses to investigate the wide range of natural and real items in their play.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff do not understand fully how to plan and assess to ensure progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and to meet the specific needs and interest of individual children. The individual assessments of the learning are not thorough enough to inform the next steps in their learning. Lack of sufficient time and clear guidance has a negative impact on developing these important aspects of their work. The staff also require updated training on the use of the Code of Practice to identify and support children with additional needs more effectively.
- The staff plan a broad programme which provides satisfactory to very good opportunities for learning across all aspect of the curriculum. There are useful weekly evaluations of the children's responses to learning and a good overview is communicated to parents on a regular basis through the newsletter.
- The indoor learning environment is attractive, stimulating and well laid out into distinct areas for play which are enhanced with displays of the children's work, relevant photographs and natural and real items. The daily timetable is well-managed to provide a good balance of learning with smooth transitions between activities.

- The staff work well as a team; their interactions with the children during indoor sessions are always good, and on occasion excellent. They promote independent purposeful play, value and support the children's own ideas and use effective open-ended questioning to extend their language and thinking. Not all of the children participate during the group story session.
- The staff are not as well deployed outdoors to ensure safe play and to sustain high quality interactions. Outdoor learning and teaching has been identified appropriately as an area requiring further development.
- The quality of the care and welfare impacts positively on supporting the children's attitudes and dispositions for learning; the staff create a caring and relaxed, family ethos in which the children are comfortable and responsive.

7. Leadership and management

- The processes for self-evaluation and effective action planning leading to continuous improvement are not well developed at all levels of leadership and management.
- The leadership manages the organisation of the daily programme effectively and fosters good working relationships among the staff team. The team reflect on and evaluate aspects of their daily practice and are aware both of their strengths and of those areas requiring further development.
- Parents are kept informed about the work of the pre-school and their children's progress; their views are sought and valued. Information is transferred to the feeder primary schools to help the children make a smooth transition.
- The early years specialist has identified areas requiring improvement; yet the systematic actions and training required to bring about the improvement in the relevant skill of the staff are unclear, as is evidence of any improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Department. The following areas need to be addressed:
 - the staff need to implement their risk assessment during outdoor play more rigorously; and
 - the management committee need to complete the relevant child protection training.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

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

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop the skill and understanding of the staff in how to use planning and assessment to ensure progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and to meet the specific needs and interest of individual children;
- improve the quality of learning, teaching and safety during outdoor play; and
- develop effective self-evaluation, action planning and relevant staff training at all levels of leadership and management including for the early years specialist.

Health and safety

1. The small toddler slide is not adequately supervised and is too small for safe play by the pre-school children.
2. The staff are not deployed effectively to ensure safe play in the sectioned off area of the car park.

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

Part-time: am
9:00-12:30

Details of staff

Number of:	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3

Number of: *	
Students	2
Trainees	

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <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

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 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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