

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

TLC Playgroup, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
May 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
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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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement pre-school/Education and Training Inspectorate: a process for self evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

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

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 and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The small number of responses from the parents indicates their satisfaction with the overall quality of the educational and pastoral provision and the progress their children make. The staff identified the need for further training. The comments have been shared with the leadership and management.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	12	*	25% ¹	*
Staff	*	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

2. Context

TLC playgroup is part of Tender Loving Care day-care. The playgroup operates in a dedicated pre-school room and provides one funded part-time morning session. All of the children who attend are in their pre-school year and come mainly from the local area.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision in the playgroup; 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 finding

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- Most of the children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children are generally well settled, co-operate well with the daily routines and are developing well their social skills. They access and use materials with increasing confidence and a majority of the children can concentrate and persevere at activities.
- Most of the children are confident to talk about their play to each other and the adults. They participate well during group songs and rhymes and listen attentively during the group story. While a small number of children show an interest in print and emergent writing, more needs to be done to develop further the children's interest in books, mark-making and rhyme and rhythm throughout the session.
- A majority of the children show an awareness of early mathematical concepts and language. They count, explore size, shape, and quantity and make comparisons during their play.
- The children use the art materials well to develop their own ideas as they make collages and models. The children's observational and representational drawings and paintings are still at an early stage of development. The planning and development of opportunities to encourage the children's imaginative play needs to be more responsive to the needs and interests of the children.
- The children enjoy investigating the properties of sand and water and planting in the outdoor area. The children would benefit from further opportunities to use their senses to explore natural materials and to care for living things.

6. Provision

- The staff have made significant improvements to the quality of the learning environment in recent months. The playroom is set out well in distinct areas for play and an increasing range of suitable resources foster the children's own choice and independence. The staff should build on this further to ensure there is sufficient challenge and progression in the resources for all of the children.

- The staff listen to the children, give sensitive support and at times exploit well the learning potential within the activities. The staff need to have a higher level of expectation of the children's abilities and promote the children's learning and language more consistently throughout the session. The staff recognise the need to continue to develop their understanding of the pre-school curriculum.
- The planning and assessment are at early stage of development. The staff have identified this as a priority area for further training and support from their early years specialist to include planning for children with additional needs.
- The quality of pastoral; care is good. There is a warm, caring and supportive ethos based on good working relationships between the children and the staff.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader and staff work well as a team. The leadership and management are committed to bringing about further improvement through investment in resources, training and further qualifications for the staff. While systematic self-evaluation and development planning are not yet developed within the group, the staff are reflective and can identify clearly their strengths and the areas which still require improvement. There is clear evidence of recent action being taken to bring about improvement;
- There are effective links with other professionals to support individual children as the need arises. The transition arrangements to the primary schools to which the children will transfer and the links with parents need to be developed further.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the playgroup's arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. In particular the playgroup urgently needs to:
 - identify a deputy designated officer who is on the premises when the playgroup is operating;
 - complete the appropriate training for designated officers;
 - review and update their policies, in particular those for intimate care, managing positive behaviour, anti-bullying and child protection to ensure they are fully comprehensive, tailored to the setting, understood by all of the staff and shared with the parents;

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- provide suitable progression in the children's learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum through the further development of appropriate planning and assessment methods;
- improve the quality of the staff interactions to promote language and learning more effectively; and
- access specific training and support to develop further the staff's understanding of the pre-school curriculum.

The district inspector will return within six working weeks to monitor progress towards addressing the safeguarding issue. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-24 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	TLC Playgroup
Address:	162A Cavehill Road BELFAST BT15 5EX
Management Type:	Private

Date of inspection:	21 May 2014
Date of previous inspection:	

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	12	-
in their immediate pre-school year	12	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	12	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	3	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
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	-	-

* 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		3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within previous 12 months		3

Number of: ***	
Students	0
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	-	n/a

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