

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Windmill Playgroup, Newry,
County Down

Voluntary pre-school playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
April 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

Windmill Playgroup is located in Well Lane Community Centre in Newry, County Down. The children attending the playgroup mainly come from the surrounding area. The playgroup share the accommodation with other community groups and set up and clear away the resources and equipment daily.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	14
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3
With English as an additional language	7

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	87%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

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

Seventeen percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All responses were very positive about the warm, caring staff and the nurturing environment. A summary of the responses was shared with a representative from the management committee and the staff.

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

- All of the children are happy, well-settled, can self-register at key times and make free choices selecting their areas of play. They engage in lengthy, concentrated and purposeful play and show good levels of independence.
- The children are friendly, well-mannered and; have good listening skills. Almost all of the children engage articulately with their peers and adults, join enthusiastically in imaginative role play scenarios and can express their thoughts and feelings appropriately. The children are developing a good understanding of and use of mathematical language. Their art work is imaginative, detailed and very creative.
- Overall, the children are developing a good standard in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum, with the exception of the development of music; although the children participate in informal singing and rhymes they have insufficient opportunities to explore sound and rhythm through the use of musical instruments.
- The children with additional needs are integrated well within the group and are making good progress.

6. Quality of provision

- The planning does not provide adequate detail, across the pre-school curriculum to guide the staff in their work. There is insufficient differentiation to take account of the individual needs and interests of all the children to ensure progression in their learning.
- While the staff observe and record the children's learning regularly, the written observations and assessments are not utilised effectively to inform future planning; the process requires further development.
- The children who require additional support are identified appropriately; however, the documentation to outline the support provided and progress made needs further development particularly in relation to individual targets.
- The staff are caring and sensitive in their approach; they listen to the children and encourage them to be creative and investigative in their learning. They model play effectively and ask open-ended questions skilfully to extend the children's thinking processes; however there were missed opportunities to develop early mathematics during imaginative role play. The promotion of healthy eating and energetic physical play is a key strength.
- The staff have created a calm, stimulating and attractive child-centred learning environment. They make appropriate use of all the available space; the recently added natural resources enhance the children's learning experiences in many areas.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the children's learning and well-being. The children are forming positive relationships with their peers and with adults which is evident in their exemplary behaviour and good social skills.

7. Leadership and management

- The approach to development planning and self-evaluation is underdeveloped. The current action plans do not identify sufficiently detailed targets to enable the staff to monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions to promote improvement. The staff have attended relevant training and cluster events with their local Sure Start programme.
- The current system for reviewing, updating and ratifying policies by the staff and management committee is not effective.
- There is a strong collegial approach with excellent working relationships between the staff, playgroup leader and the early years specialist (EYS) from the Early Years Organisation. It will be important for the leadership and management, with the support of the EYS, to extend and develop the staff's understanding and use of self-evaluation and development planning to ensure high quality provision for all children.
- There are good links with parents and visitors to the playgroup to enhance the children's learning experiences.

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, Windmill Playgroup needs to:

- Review the Safeguarding policy and flowchart to ensure all information is accurate and up to date.

9. Overall effectiveness

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

The areas for improvement are:

- to continue to develop the methods of record keeping and planning to ensure robust and accurate information is recorded to guide the staff effectively in their work;
- for the leadership and management, with the support of the early years specialist, to extend and develop self-evaluation and development planning to ensure high quality provision at all levels; and
- to implement a manageable system to identify, update and ratify all policies in a timely manner, taking account of relevant circulars and guidance.

The ETI will monitor and report on the playgroup'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 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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