

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Woodland Adventure  
Community Playgroup, Augher,  
Co Tyrone

Report of an inspection in  
June 2015

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*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  
SERVICE  
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 settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

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

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 staff to complete a confidential questionnaire or to meet with the inspection team.

Forty-two percent of the parents responded to the questionnaire and were positive about most aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the playgroup. The staff responses were also positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the playgroup.

## 2. Context

Woodland Adventure Community Playgroup is situated in a purpose- built accommodation set in a rural location opposite the local primary school. The playgroup operates one part-time session for children from the local area. There are year-on-year fluctuations in the enrolments in the playgroup and, currently, the group has less than eight children enrolled in their pre-school year; however, the projected intake is due to increase to ten children in September 2015. Currently, seven children are in their immediate pre-school year and five children are in their penultimate pre-school year. The leader was in post at the time of the last inspection in 2007.

## 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards;
2. the quality of provision; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

## 4. Overall findings

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Key findings of the inspection**

### **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are confident and engage effectively in the activities provided by the staff. They are well behaved and polite to one another and the adults. The children often turn to the adults for support and engagement in play due to the small numbers in the playgroup. Their personal and social skills are very good and they can play collaboratively, make choices independently and have acquired good self-management skills.
- The children have effective communication skills. The children listen to and engage with stories and rhymes and a small number of the children are able to recall the sequence of events in very good detail. The children's fine motor skills are good and their mark-making and representational drawing are well developed and celebrated in the displays in the playroom.
- The children show a keen interest in farming often turning the planned activities provided by the staff into imaginative role play related to farming experiences. The children have a good awareness of the world around them and grow plants in the outdoors. Their mathematical awareness of shape, time and number is good.

### **6. Provision**

- The staff provide an effective pre-school programme based on the High Scope methodology. The children enjoy the activities and as they often present their own ideas, more attention needs to be given to developing learning arising from incidental opportunities through play. The staff need to ensure a balance across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum. The activities are well-resourced and there are opportunities for visitors to talk to the children about their roles in the community which promotes effectively the children's understanding of the world around them. The daily timetable provides a lengthy period of play. It will be appropriate for the staff to develop further their planning to extend the children's learning experiences relating to the world around them.
- The staff interaction with the children was always of a good to very good quality. The staff model good role play and develop the children's language and thinking through their involvement in the children's play. On a few occasions, the expectations of the staff for more formal writing and counting resulted in missed opportunities to interact at the children's stage of development, to promote creative skills and awareness about how to represent their ideas using the three-dimensional materials.
- The planning is detailed and guides effectively the progression in activities throughout the year. The staff have compiled detailed records of the children's learning that includes samples and photographs of the children's work. The staff now need to make more effective use of incidental learning opportunities arising from the responses of the children to the activities provided and plan to meet individual needs and interests.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There is a welcoming ethos in the playgroup. The staff have a consistent, positive and respectful approach with the children which encourage the children to be well-behaved and to share resources.
- The staff give very good attention to the promotion of healthy eating through the provision of healthy snacks. The children have regular opportunities to engage in energetic physical activity outdoors. There is an appropriate awareness of good hygiene routines.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leader is highly committed and works diligently to sustain the playgroup. She has developed an effective team working approach with the deputy leader and management group to support the continuous improvement of the playgroup.
- There is an appropriate overview of the three- year development plan. The staff are beginning to develop action plans to promote improvement in the pre-school programme. They have used the process of self-evaluation to bring about significant improvements in the playgroup's provision, such as, the development of a stimulating learning environment. The chairperson manages effectively the available finance very well to ensure that there are good quality resources for the children: however, the playgroup has to rely on grants from a range of sources to remain viable. The membership of the committee consists mainly of parents; they contribute, through fund-raising events, to the upkeep of the playgroup and they installed recently a new heating system.
- The early years specialist (EYS), from the Early Years Organisation, has provided good support for the playgroup in the development of their understanding of the High Scope programme. Planning and assessment methods which recognise more effectively the individual needs of the children are appropriately identified as an area for further development. The EYS needs to develop further the capacity of the staff to, reflect on critically, and understand self-evaluation processes to promote ongoing improvement in the pre-school programme.
- The playgroup has developed very good links with the parents through an informative induction meeting and regular newsletters. The parents are welcomed to the playroom at the beginning and end of each session. The staff have a suggestion box in the entrance area and they are open to hearing and addressing the views of all the parents.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the playgroup has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The following areas need to be addressed:
  - the management committee and the staff need to review the policies and procedures for safeguarding the children; and
  - to ensure consistency and up-to-date information about roles and responsibilities.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the playgroup is good. The playgroup has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement are:

- the staff need to build more effectively on the children's interests and needs and ensure that there is an appropriate balance of learning activities across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- the management committee and staff need to address the safeguarding issues as identified in the report.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION WOODLAND ADVENTURE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	12	-
in their immediate pre-school year	7	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	7	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	7	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	-
with English as an additional language	0	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	89%
Number of days open in previous school year	188

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>
3¼ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader		2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		0
New appointments within previous 12 months		0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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