

### Summary of key findings from inspection - June 2025

-  The staff, in their new roles as leader and deputy leader, have begun to review the setting's vision **'to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment in partnership with parents to enhance the children's learning and development.'**
-  The children are confident in their interactions with each other and the staff. They enjoy developing their fine motor skills by manipulating the Lego; investigating how to mix different colours in the water tray; and, role-playing within the hospital, to include recording appointments and applying bandages to different parts of the body.
-  The staff have identified appropriate priorities for development which include: revising how they monitor and evaluate the children's learning across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum to inform more robustly the children's progression; and reviewing and developing further the outdoor learning area, to include a sensory garden.
-  The planning, observation and assessment cycle is at an early stage of development. The staff are appropriately reviewing the planning to focus more explicitly on the children's learning across the pre-school curriculum.
-  The quality of the staff interactions and their modelling of language to the children is inconsistent. There are missed opportunities to use the children's interests to engage them in sustained independent learning.
-  The staff have engaged with the EYS, made visits to a local playgroup to develop further their understanding of the pre-school curriculum and participated in training on special educational needs. They are eager to engage in professional learning opportunities, aligned to the playgroup's priority areas.
-  A small number of policies require updating, including the intimate care policy and the special educational needs policy so that parents are informed more fully about the playgroup's procedures for providing support.
-  There are insufficient opportunities for the children to problem solve, participate in exploratory outdoor play experiences and enhance their respect for the world around them. There are not enough authentic and natural resources to support the staff in extending the children's play and developing their curiosity and investigative skills.
-  As part of the joint Health-Education Initiative, the Early Intervention Transformation Programme, the health visitor completes the children's 3+ Review with parents and uses this information to prioritise early intervention, such as speech and language support. The health visitor also talks to the children about healthy eating and reinforces the children's learning on healthy food choices.
-  The children's work is proudly displayed in the room. They make good representational drawings of faces and enjoy creating colourful pieces of art which they can discuss with their peers and staff. The staff should build further on the opportunities for child-led play and the development of the children's creativity skills.
-  The playgroup has developed meaningful partnerships within the local community. For example, the Parent Teacher Association fund-raise regularly for the playgroup by organising events such as 'Movie Night' and the Christmas Fair.

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- Through the 'Business in the Community' initiative, the staff are supported by a local engineering company to develop the playgroup's outdoor area. In collaboration with the local primary schools, the staff organise events which develop the children's love of reading and their well-being. Through these meaningful connections, the playgroup is an integral part of the local community.
- The parents are kept well informed about the work of the playgroup through monthly newsletters which identify how they can help their child's learning, such as looking for minibeasts on walks or reading with their child. Parents have also recently participated in the Department of Education's 'Big Bedtime Read' and their evaluations highlight how the programme has supported them to improve their child's interest in books. The staff also use a digital application which keeps parents informed about their child's learning.
- At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the playgroup demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

#### Areas for action:

- to develop more robust processes for self-evaluation and the staff's knowledge of the pre-school curriculum, underpinned by regular opportunities for staff professional learning; and
- to develop and implement an effective planning, observation and assessment cycle to support the consistent monitoring and evaluation of the children's progression across the pre-school curriculum.

### Going forward

- The staff at Kilrea Community Early Learners are committed to working in partnership with parents '**to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment**' which is enhanced by the caring and nurturing relationships between the staff and the children. The support of the management committee and the Early Years Specialist alongside focused professional learning opportunities for the staff, should enable them to build on the work already begun and empower them on their journey of improvement.
- The inspection has highlighted two areas for action to enable the playgroup to achieve its vision more fully. Kilrea Community Early Learners will require sustained external support to help it address the areas for action. There will be a progress inspection.