

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

## Play Links Playgroup, Strangford, County Down

Voluntary Playgroup, DE Ref No 4AB-0278

### Report of a Follow-up Inspection in October 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## Follow-up to the inspection of Play Links Playgroup, Strangford, BT30 7NB (4AB-0278)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Play Links Playgroup in March 2019<sup>1</sup>, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- develop further the quality of staff interactions with the children;
- develop and implement short-term planning to provide breadth, balance and progression in learning for all areas of the curriculum, in particular for early mathematical development and the world around us;
- make regular and effective use of observations of the children's learning across all areas of the curriculum to inform future planning; and
- develop a robust process of self-evaluation and action planning leading to improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

The pre-school's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The pre-school's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in October 2021 and a follow-up inspection in October 2022.

In the interval since the original inspection, the pre-school has received external training delivered by the Child Care Partnership.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school include:

- the leader taking on the role of Early Years Specialist for the pre-school in September 2019 and one member of staff is completing currently a level 3 qualification;
- additional planning and assessment time is provided for the staff; and
- the staff joined a pre-school cluster to share practice.

As a consequence of the key changes and actions taken within the pre-school, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Pre-School Inspection - Playlinks Playgroup, Strangford, Downpatrick, County Down 4AB-0278 \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk)

## Key findings

The outcomes for learners have improved and are now good. All of the children, settle quickly to productive and sustained play. There is clear evidence of friendships forming as the children play both alongside and with each other. They use their senses to experiment with and explore the natural resources that are integrated into many areas of play, such as, leaves, sticks, seeds and fruit. Most of the children are developing a good understanding of early mathematical concepts and are beginning to use mathematical language associated with number, shape, size and quantity.

The quality of provision has improved and is now good. The staff have reviewed the organisation of the pre-school day to allow the children extended periods of free play both indoors and outdoors. They engage effectively with the children to introduce new language, develop early mathematical concepts and nurture the children's curiosity in the world around them. All of the staff work collaboratively to record observations of the children's learning and use these to plan a balanced curriculum across all of the six areas of learning. As a result, they are meeting better the individual needs and interests of the children. The pre-school has purchased new resources for the outdoor area and the staff have identified appropriately the need to develop the planning and provision for outdoor learning.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and are now good. The staff are proactive in identifying and accessing a range of professional development opportunities. Through regular reviews of their practice and completion of monthly 'Reflective Journals', the staff have effected improvement in the quality of the planning, assessment and learning experiences for the children. Through ongoing self-evaluation, the leadership has identified appropriately the need to improve the planning and provision for outdoor learning.

## Overall effectiveness

Playlinks Playgroup now demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the pre-school sustains improvement in:

- developing the planning and provision for outdoor learning.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2022

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the [ETI website](#)

Follow us on  [@ETI\\_news](#)  [@ETInews](#)  InsPIRE