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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



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**Department of Education
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Ballygowan Community Playgroup
Newtownards**

October 2008

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BALLYGOWAN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN, BT23 6LT (4AB-0167)

The inspection in Ballygowan Community Playgroup in April 2006 highlighted strengths in the good relationships between the staff and the children, the thoughtful organisation of the day and the quality of the staff's interaction with the children. It also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to develop the methods of planning and assessment;
- to develop aspects of the child protection procedures; and
- to develop a policy for special educational needs (SEN).

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the pre-school centre has taken place:

- the staff were supported by a number of different early years specialists (EYS);
- a permanent EYS took up post in January 2008;
- new resources have been purchased to develop further the physical play programme; and
- the staff have developed links with another pre-school group.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out an inspection visit to the centre as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visit on 15 October 2008, and also takes account of the findings of the visit in May 2008.

The pre-school centre has a development plan. It has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group:

- a new format is being used for planning which identifies some interesting activities for the children;
- the staff collate some appropriate observations of the children's responses to the play activities and are beginning to use the information to inform the planning;
- the staff, with the support of the EYS have drawn up a policy for SEN;
- the procedures for reporting child protection matters is now displayed within the centre and the policy is shared with the parents; and
- there is a developing sense of team-spirit among the staff and new EYS.

The areas which need further improvement are:

- the staff need to develop the planning further to identify more clearly the learning inherent in the play activities; and
- to continue to develop the staff's observations to include all areas of the children's learning.

The follow-up inspection findings confirm that the pre-school centre has demonstrated some evidence of improvement but some areas for improvement remain to be addressed more rigorously. The pre-school staff have not yet engaged in the process of self-evaluation. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes used for self-evaluation are developed fully to focus strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

The pre-school centre's progress in the continuing areas for improvement will be followed-up by the District Inspector.

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