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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**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

Ballyronan Community Playgroup Magherafelt

November 2008

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BALLYRONAN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, MAGHERAFELT, CO LONDONDERRY, BT45 6JA (3AB-0264)

The inspection in May 2006 highlighted strengths in the ethos of the pre-school centre and the quality of the learning environment, and identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the quality of the staff's interactions with the children;
- the staff's understanding of the links between planning and assessment and how they might plan to meet the needs of individual children;
- the strategies employed by the early years specialist (EYS) to support the staff and the management group; and
- the urgent need to access training in child protection.

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

- the centre has experienced a prolonged period of instability and uncertainty and there have been a number of changes in the leadership of the centre;
- a new leader was appointed and took up post in September 2008;
- a new EYS was appointed in January 2008;
- the staff accessed training in child protection in February 2007;
- the playroom and outdoor area have been refurbished; and
- additional resources for indoor and outdoor play have been acquired.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a series of inspection visits to the centre as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visit on 20 November 2008 and also takes account of the findings of the visits in November 2006, April 2008 and September 2008.

Action plans were drafted in light of the inspection findings and the centre now has a comprehensive development plan which highlights appropriate priorities for the next planning period 2008-2011.

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

- the centre's EYS has provided focused support for the staff and she has helped to develop the role of the management group in improving the quality of the centre;

- the written planning is more comprehensive and detailed. The monthly plan outlines themes and topics and the learning to be developed across all areas of the curriculum. The short-term planning now focuses on the learning potential within the play activities and is helping to improve the quality of the staff's interactions with the children. The staff evaluate the programme on a daily basis and the short-term planning is adjusted to take account of the children's ideas;
- the staff now operate a key worker system and are making regular observations of the children's responses in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and language and communication;
- the staff have identified a small number of children with particular learning needs, and have developed individual learning plans which contain appropriate short-term targets and useful evaluations; and
- policies and procedures for child protection have been reviewed, updated and shared with the parents.

The area which needs further improvement is as follows:

- the staff should continue to develop the children's profiles by recording assessments in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and share this information with the parents.

Since the inspection, the pre-school centre has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation are developed to focus more strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

Very good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this centre is now good. The centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow-up inspection has identified some aspects of the areas for improvement still to be addressed but equally the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address these.

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