

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Castlewellan Community  
Playgroup, Castlewellan,  
County Down

Voluntary playgroup

Report of a Follow-up inspection  
in June 2018



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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF CASTLEWELLAN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, COUNTY DOWN, BT31 9ED (4AB0435)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Castlewellan Community Playgroup in January 2017<sup>1</sup>, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement were to:

- develop the planning and provision for outdoor play and the world around us; and
- develop further the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate clearly the impact of the improvement work on the outcomes for the children.

The pre-school did not submit a post-inspection action plan.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in November 2017 and a follow-up inspection in June 2018.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the leader and the deputy leader have completed their level 5 leadership qualification;
- a new early years' specialist (EYS) from the Early Years' Organisation (EYO) was appointed in February 2018;
- the staff have accessed professional development opportunities on self-evaluation, world around us, music and rhyme and physical play and child care partnership through the EYO; and
- the staff have no access to a permanent outdoor play facility due to the ongoing building work.

### **Key Findings**

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The management committee have a better understanding of the work of the playgroup; they receive detailed reports from the leader and visit regularly the playgroup during operational hours. The staff, through working with the EYS, reflect regularly on their practice and have effected significant improvement in the world around us curriculum. More effective links have been developed with parents through, for example, the Big Bedtime Read initiative which has impacted positively on the children's interest in books. The staff have established good links with a local primary school which is benefiting the children's transition to primary school. Through self-evaluation, the staff have identified appropriate areas for improvement which have been incorporated into a well-constructed development plan.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-castlewellan-community-playgroup-county-down-4ab-0435.pdf>

The quality of learning and teaching is now good. The staff model play very well and build effectively on the children's interests and responses to extend their learning. Due to the lack of access to a natural outdoor area, the staff have been proactive in incorporating a wide range of natural materials and resources into the playroom and increasing the number of educational visits to places of interest in the locality. This has improved significantly the quality of the world around us programme and impacted positively on the outcomes of the children. The outdoor play programme is developing and provides opportunities for the children to extend their learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum; the staff have identified appropriately the need for outdoor planning and provision to be developed further once the building work is completed.

The standards and achievements are now very good. Almost all of the children talk confidently with adults and each other using an increasing range of vocabulary. They explore and investigate the wide range of real and natural resources in the playroom. During play, the children use early mathematical language naturally and appropriately and have high levels of interest in mark making. The children are independent and almost all engage in concentrated and productive play throughout the session.

### **Overall Effectiveness**

Castlewellan Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement in developing further the process of self-evaluation to ensure high quality planning and provision for outdoor play.

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