



*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**

**Cloughmills Playgroup  
Ballymena**

**June 2009**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF CLOUGHMILLS PLAYGROUP, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT44 9LF (3BB-0360)**

The inspection in Cloughmills Playgroup in March 2007 highlighted strengths in the very positive ethos, the instances of effective staff interaction, the good start made to the planning methods and the strong sense of team-work among the staff. It identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to develop further the assessment methods;
- to revise the provision for physical play; and
- to re-organise the latter part of the session.

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

- the centre has moved into a vacant classroom within the local primary school;
- the physical play areas both indoors and outdoors have been further developed and resourced;
- additional resources have been acquired for the children's physical play experiences;
- the staff have attended training in supporting children with special educational needs and the 'Top-Tots/Top-Start' training programme;
- the centre's assessment methods have been reviewed and adapted; and
- the staff have reviewed and changed aspects of the organisation of the day.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a monitoring visit in October 2008 and a follow-up inspection visit on 5 June 2009.

The action plan produced by the centre in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality and was adjusted in light of feedback given by the Inspectorate during the monitoring visit.

The pre-school centre has a development plan. It now needs to be adjusted to plan the priorities for the next few years.

Very good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection.

**The following are the most important improvements since the standard inspection:**

- the new premises provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment for the children;
- the staff have reviewed and improved the organisation of the session, transitions throughout the session flow smoothly and the routines of the day support effectively the children's sense of responsibility and their care of the centre;
- the children have daily opportunities to enjoy large group stories, music and physical play sessions both indoors and outdoors;
- the staff have developed an appropriate system of monitoring and recording each child's progress and development. The staff are making relevant, honest and accurate observations and using them more consistently to meet the needs of all the children;
- the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is of a high standard there is clear evidence the children are making good progress in many areas of their development; and
- the staff have invested in a range of good quality resources for the children's physical play experiences. The thoughtful arrangement of activities and the teaching of safe play, help the children to gain appropriate physical skills and to use a variety of equipment and tools with confidence.

Since the inspection, the pre-school 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.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this pre-school centre is now very good. The pre-school centre is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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