

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Denamona Community Playgroup, Fintona,
County Tyrone

Voluntary Playgroup, DE Ref No 2BB-0385

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in December 2022



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Department of Education
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Follow-up to the inspection of Denamona Community Playgroup, Fintona, BT78 2BN (2BB-0385)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Denamona Pre-School in November 2019¹, which concluded that the playgroup needed to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- develop further the quality of staff interactions in promoting the learning opportunities inherent in the activities and resources through improved observation, assessment and planning processes;
- review the organisation of the day and layout of the playroom and ensure that all the children have sufficient time and space to develop freely chosen and concentrated play; and
- develop further the processes for self-evaluation and action planning to bring about higher quality provision and outcomes for the children based on the requirements of the Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education.

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

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

In the interval since the initial inspection, the playgroup has received external support from an early years specialist (EYS), which included online and face-to-face training.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the playgroup include the:

- enhanced monitoring arrangements by the management committee of the leadership and staffing levels in the playgroup;
- appointment of a new leader and deputy leader;
- increase in the number of underage children who now comprise one third of the pre-school class;
- review and development of the curriculum planning for all areas of learning;
- revised daily routines for indoor and outdoor learning;
- use of DE funding to develop the indoor and outdoor learning environment; and

¹ [Pre-School Inspection – Denamona Community Playgroup, Fintona, County Tyrone](#)

- staff's engagement in a range of professional learning opportunities including: curriculum planning and assessment; special education needs training and support from the Education Authority's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion Service; and early speech and language development with the Childcare Partnership and an on-site speech therapist.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners have improved and are now very good.

The happy, confident children make choices of where they want to play and what resources they want to use. A majority of the children can independently dress themselves in outdoor attire for outdoor play and in character costumes to support their role play. They use their imaginative skills collaboratively to plan and act out character roles in various play situations and engage enthusiastically for sustained periods of time in productive play, with good levels of resilience and perseverance. All children interact well with the staff. They listen and respond to instructions, express their own ideas, share books and ask questions confidently to gain further information and knowledge. The children follow well all established routines and transitions and use mathematical language naturally through the course of their play. The children use their senses to observe and explore the wide range of authentic materials in their play environments.

The quality of provision has improved and is now very good.

The staff have a very good understanding of the pre-school curriculum and have developed an indoor and outdoor learning environment with well-defined learning spaces to support the children's learning and development. A particular strength of the pre-school's provision is the staff's responsive approach to planning. The staff take account of the wide range of ages and stages within the pre-school and provide a range of stimulating activities that are child-centred, varied, progressive and promote equity. There is a comprehensive, cyclical and reflective approach to assessment of the children's learning. Staff reflect on their interactions with children and use their observations of the children's learning to inform planning, both individually and as a whole class. The staff use a range of effective teaching and learning strategies to develop and extend children's language.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and are now very good.

The leadership and staff work collegially, are reflective practitioners and can articulate clearly the impact of the improvement work taken on the outcomes for the learners and the quality of provision. The leadership and management prioritise the professional learning needs of the staff, which reflects the pre-school's context. The staff value the support provided by the EYS. In partnership, they have identified further

appropriate areas for improvement, have developed good quality action plans and have well-embedded monitoring and evaluation processes to inform ongoing self-evaluation. The Engage funding² has been used strategically to support the development of the children's language skills, which has resulted in the significant improvement of the children's understanding and use of language.

Overall effectiveness

Denamona Pre-School now demonstrates a high capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners. The ETI will monitor how the pre-school sustains improvement.

² The Department of Education Engage funding aims to limit any long-term adverse impact of COVID-19 by supporting pupils' learning and engagement on their return to the setting through the provision of high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every setting in Northern Ireland.

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