

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

First Steps Playgroup, Belfast

Voluntary playgroup

Report of a Follow-up inspection
in December 2016

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF FIRST STEPS PLAYGROUP, BELFAST, BT11 9GS (1AB-0321)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of First Steps Playgroup in October 2015¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The key areas identified were to:

- improve the organisation of the transitional times between routines and activities in order to maximise fully the children's learning opportunities and experiences;
- improve the planning and provision for physical play; and
- develop further the procedures for self-evaluation to promote improvement and to include the strategic evaluation of the quality of provision for learning.

The action plans were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The playgroup's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in April 2016 and a follow-up inspection in December 2016.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the following actions or changes have taken place;

- a new leader and assistant were appointed and took up their positions in September 2016; and
- the early years specialist (EYS) in post until October 2016 provided appropriate support in addressing the further development of the procedures for self-evaluation to promote improvement.

Key Findings

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The centre co-ordinator and leader work closely together to evaluate the practice and plan for the future development of the playgroup. The detailed development plan outlines appropriate areas for development and the action plans help to guide the staff in this work.

The quality of learning and teaching is now good. Working relationships at all levels are very good and contribute to the friendly, caring ethos in the centre. The organisation of transition between routines and activities has been reviewed and there is now more emphasis on exploiting the children's learning opportunities and experiences; the staff need to ensure the good practice noted during the follow up inspection is applied more consistently.

The staff know the children well and gather valuable information about their responses to the planned activities and their development. The method of recording the information is not well enough developed, nor linked to planning which ensures that the children's needs are met fully. While the overall provision for physical play has improved the written planning does not yet identify the learning to be promoted in the activities. It will be important for the new EYS to support the staff in the development work identified in this report.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-first-steps-playgroup-belfast.pdf>

The standards and achievements are now good. The children are well settled and are familiar with the routines of the centre; they often engage in purposeful and concentrated play and produce representational work of a very good standard.

Overall Effectiveness

First Steps 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 the aspects of record keeping and planning outlined in this report.

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