

# Education and Training Inspectorate

## PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



### First Steps Playgroup, Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

Private Day Nursery Pre-school Room DE Ref No (4CA-0638)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER  
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EXCELLENCE



## **THIRD FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF FIRST STEPS PLAYGROUP, ULSTER HOSPITAL, DUNDONALD, BT16 1RH (4CA-0638)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection (FUI) in First Steps Playgroup in April 2018<sup>1</sup>, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement<sup>2</sup> identified in the interest of all the learners.

The second FUI identified the following areas for improvement:

- the leadership and management need to establish a period of stability among the staff team at all levels, define clearly their roles and responsibilities and develop a collegial approach to continuous improvement;
- the staff, at all levels, need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills to ensure a consistently high quality of provision to promote the children's learning across all areas of the pre-school programme;
- the planned programme needs to guide more effectively progression in learning across the curriculum both indoors and outdoors linked to the interests and needs of the children;
- the staff need to improve their knowledge and expertise of how to identify and plan for children with special educational needs;
- effective systems of self-evaluation, development planning and action planning need to be developed and implemented to guide the necessary improvements; and
- the leadership and management at all levels need to improve their knowledge and expertise of quality pre-school education to be able to monitor effectively the improvements required across all aspects of the setting's work.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a monitoring visit in June 2018 and an interim follow-up visit in December 2018. The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI during the interim visits. A third follow-up inspection took place on 21 May 2019.

In the interval since the initial inspection the staff received external specialist support from the Early Years Organisation, who provided training in relation to planning, observations, special educational needs and self-evaluation.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school included the appointment of new leadership in August 2018 and a change of staff in April 2019.

### **Key findings**

The outcomes for learners remain an important area for improvement. The children's interest and curiosity in solving problems and exploring the world around them remains underdeveloped. A minority of the children still require adult assistance to help them understand the adults' expectations and the daily routines and a small number lose attention and need to be supported by the staff to join in actively during group story time. Overall, the children are developing greater independence, using more mathematical language as an integral part of their play and daily routines and can explore and express their creative ideas through representational art activities. The majority of the children settle quickly to their chosen tasks and most of them listen and engage well in stories and rhymes.

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<sup>1</sup> [Follow-up Inspection - First Steps Playgroup, Dundonald, Belfast | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

The quality of the provision remains an important area for improvement. The planning, while more detailed, does not indicate specifically enough the progression in the learning potential and the role of the adult across the learning areas both indoors and outdoors. The newly-formed staff team respond positively to the guidance of the leadership and the early years specialist. The quality of the staff's interaction is more consistent in promoting the children's language and learning; they use questions and the daily routines to promote early mathematical concepts and develop the children's thinking and language. The staff make regular and pertinent observations of the children's progress across the pre-school curriculum and identify and support with greater confidence and consistency the children who need additional help with aspects of their learning and development. The staff have begun to enhance the learning environment to stimulate the children's curiosity and creativity and increase their independence.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The leadership has a clear vision for improvement and the staff team is consistent and has a better understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. The staff are developing a team approach and co-operate and collaborate effectively. They can articulate and evidence the impact of improvement work on their practice and the provision. The staff benefit from and complete important improvement actions in the allocated non-contact time. For example, they make relevant evaluations of the sessions and ensure that the action plan targets focus more closely on improvements in learning for the children. They identify the strengths in the provision and the priority areas for further development including, for example, the outdoor learning. The staff have been supported effectively by the Early Years Organisation to work more collaboratively and become more reflective in their practice.

### **Overall effectiveness**

First Steps Day Playgroup, Dundonald, needs to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The FUI has identified the following areas for improvement:

- continue to develop the planning to bring about continuous progress in the children's learning both indoors and outdoors; and
- consolidate the impact of the improvement work on the children's outcomes.

Further action will be considered by the Department.

## Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

### Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management<sup>2</sup>:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

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<sup>2</sup> And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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