

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Happy Tots Playgroup, Portadown, County Armagh

Voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (5AB-0647)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in June 2019

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF HAPPY TOTS PLAYGROUP, PORTADOWN, BT67 9ND (5AB-0647)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Happy Tots Playgroup in February 2018¹, 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 and employ consistently behaviour management strategies with a small number of children;
- to develop the planning and provision in personal, social and emotional development and language development for the two distinct age groups within the setting;
- to improve the provision for newcomer children and those with additional needs; and
- to develop further the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate clearly the impact of improvement work on the outcomes for the children.

The pre-school's action plans were of a good quality.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in October 2018 and a follow-up inspection in June 2019. In the interval since the initial inspection the staff received external specialist support from an Independent Early Years Specialist (IEYS), who provided training in behaviour management, planning and observations, the learning environment and self-evaluation. Consequently, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school include:

- the appointment of an IEYS in August 2018; and
- the staff visiting a range of other pre-school settings to observe good practice and access professional development opportunities.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners are now good. While the children's attention and concentration during story time, rhymes and songs has improved significantly, in a minority of children they remain underdeveloped. A minority of children continue to experience difficulty in turn-taking and sharing equipment. The majority of the children settle quickly to play and show increased independence. They follow the routines of the day and transition smoothly to the various activities. Although most of the children have English as an additional language, they engage confidently with adults and visitors. They label their work with their name and enjoy experimental writing and mark-making using a range of media. Those children who are identified as having additional needs are making good progress.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-happy-tots-playgroup-portadown-county-armagh-5ab-0647.pdf>

The quality of provision is now good. Planning is differentiated appropriately for the range of ages and stages within the playgroup and there is clear evidence of observations of the children's learning informing the short-term planning. The progression in the learning within the planning; and specific key vocabulary to support the newcomer children and those with additional needs are not sufficiently developed. Staff interactions are of a good quality. The staff use information from a range of professionals to inform the planning for children who have been identified as having additional needs. The individual education plans are well-constructed, however, the children's targets are not measurable and are not reviewed regularly enough.

The playgroup's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the learning and teaching, and outcomes. The staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management, using a range of appropriate strategies to support the children. They provide a caring and inclusive environment which is conducive to learning.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. With the highly effective support provided by the IEYS, the staff work collegially and have effected improvement in the provision and outcomes for the children's personal, social, emotional and language development. There is a well-constructed development plan and associated action plans, within which the staff have identified appropriate areas for improvement.

Overall effectiveness

Happy Tots Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the pre-school sustains improvement in:

- developing further the planning for progression across all areas of the curriculum to raise further the children's outcomes.

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