

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup, DE Ref No (3AB-0366)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2022



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Follow-up to the inspection of Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare, BT39 0SQ (3AB-0366)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of Kilbride Playgroup in May 2019,¹ which concluded that the pre-school needed to continue to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- establish a permanent staff team with clear roles and responsibilities;
- improve the outcomes in learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum prioritising in the first instance, appropriate expectation for rules and routines within the playroom;
- develop the skills and understanding of the whole-staff team in planning and implementing a high quality pre-school curriculum that is matched well to the needs and interests of the children;
- evaluate the learning and track more effectively the children's progress and use the information to inform future planning;
- develop effective leadership and management with high expectations of quality provision to lead self-evaluation to bring about the necessary improvement; and
- complete the 'Fit Person' checks, required by the Health and Social Care Trust, for the leadership and management.

The pre-school's action plans were of a good quality. 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 second follow-up inspection in June 2022.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection, the pre-school has received external support from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) through a 12-week intensive support programme which focused on: the roles and responsibilities of the staff and management committee; establishing routines; improving the quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environment; and developing planning and self-evaluation processes.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school include:

- the appointment of a new staff team and a number of new management committee members, including a new chairperson;

¹ [Follow-up Inspection Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare, County Antrim](#)

- the successful completion of the 'fit person' checks; and
- the staff and some members of the management committee engaging in training, and reviewing and updating all policies and procedures.

As a consequence of the external support and the key changes and actions taken within the pre-school, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners have improved and are now good. Almost all of the children understand and follow independently the rules and routines of the playgroup and most of them engage in lengthy, concentrated and purposeful play. Nearly all of the children communicate well with their peers and the adults; expressing their thoughts, preferences and feelings articulately and enthusiastically as they discuss their play. Most of children develop well their imaginations, re-enacting family roles in the home area and mud kitchen. Almost all of the children's fine motor skills are developing well. They use confidently and safely a wide range of equipment including real cutlery, art and craft tools and writing implements. Their representational drawings are of a good standard. The children's gross motor skills are underdeveloped for the time of year; they have insufficient opportunities to participate in extended periods of energetic play.

The quality of provision has improved and there remains important areas for improvement to be addressed. The planning does not provide the detail and progression needed to guide the staff in supporting the learning inherent in the play activities. The staff do not always take sufficient account of the children's interests or build on spontaneous play on a regular basis. Planning for outdoor play, in particular energetic play, is underdeveloped. Observations and assessments of the children's learning are not recorded consistently for each area of the pre-school curriculum and are not utilised effectively to inform future planning. Most of the staff model well language and topic vocabulary and ask open-ended questions to extend the children's thinking and develop sustained conversations. The staff have created an attractive indoor playroom that enables the children to access independently resources to extend their play. The recently refurbished outdoor play area is enhancing the learning environment by creating opportunities for the children to develop their understanding of the world around us; they grow plants and investigate the properties of water, soil and sand.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and there remains important areas for improvement to be addressed. The playgroup has come through a significant period of change in staffing and management. The staff work well as a team; they have clear roles and responsibilities; and, are very willing to embrace change. They are benefitting from the support provided by the Early Years Organisation. Consequently there is now an appropriate development plan and associated action plans in place. The staff understanding and use of self-evaluation is underdeveloped. There are insufficient monitoring and evaluating procedures in place to inform the action planning processes and bring about the required improvements to the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners.

Overall effectiveness

Kilbride Playgroup needs to continue to address remaining important areas for improvement. The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- to develop planning, building on the children's interests, and ensuring progression in learning for all children;
- to develop the staff's understanding of how to use observations and assessment of the children's learning to inform the short-term planning; and
- to develop the staff's understanding and use of self-evaluation to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners and bring about further improvement.

The ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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