

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 October 2023



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

Introduction

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection of Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare in [May 2022](#), which concluded that the playgroup needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- develop planning, building on the children's interests, and ensuring progression in learning for all children;
- 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 playgroup's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings and its action plans were adjusted in response to the feedback given by ETI.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in January 2023 and a third follow-up inspection in October 2023.

In the interval since the original inspection, the playgroup has received external support from an early years specialist (EYS) from the early years organisation (EYO) in relation to developing roles and responsibilities, planning, assessment and self-evaluation processes.

Over the same period, the key actions and changes which have affected the work of the playgroup include the:

- appointment of a new leader and deputy leader;
- the new leader participating in the EYO's Pre-School Education Programme Leadership and Management training; and
- staff visiting another playgroup in order to build the knowledge and understanding of the staff in developing the indoor and outdoor environment.

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

Key findings

The outcomes for learners are now very good.

For the time of the year, all of the children are very well settled, manage routines confidently and are developing very good levels of independence and self-management. Almost all of the children are engaged fully in their learning and play purposefully and with enthusiasm for extended periods of time. Nearly all of the children are developing high levels of perseverance and problem-solving skills as they complete jigsaws, puzzles and investigate the properties of natural materials. The children's use of early mathematical language and concepts is very good; almost all can sequence, count, and explore measurement and capacity with confidence.

The quality of provision is now good.

The layout of the playroom and the outdoor learning area have been improved significantly which has resulted in greater opportunities for creative, sensory and child-led investigative play, which is impacting positively on the children's outcomes. There is now a wider range of planned learning experiences for indoor and outdoor play that cover most areas of the pre-school curriculum and take appropriate account of the children's interests. The promotion and development of energetic play requires improved planning to enhance its provision. The role of the adult within the classroom is now planned for more effectively which is helping to guide the staff's interactions with the children. The staff have put in place procedures to observe and assess regularly the children's learning across all areas; they now need to develop this further to inform consistently the future planning. All of the staff have a very positive and nurturing approach, they work effectively together as a team and most of the interactions are very effective in promoting the children's language and extending their thinking.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement remain an important area for improvement.

The recently formed staff team are at the early stages of understanding self-evaluation and require further guidance and support in developing appropriate action plans and priorities. Although the staff can articulate priorities, the development plan and associated action plans have not yet been updated for the current year. The impact of previous development work is not monitored and evaluated regularly and effectively enough. The EYS and management committee are committed to ensuring continued improvement in the action planning process.

Overall effectiveness

Kilbride Playgroup needs to address an important area for improvement. The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement:


- to develop a robust, systematic approach to self-evaluation.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

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