

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Acorns Playgroup, Coagh,
County Tyrone

Report of a Follow-up inspection
in January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LITTLE ACORNS PLAYGROUP, COAGH COUNTY TYRONE, BT80 0EJ (5AB-0630)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Little Acorns Playgroup in January 2015¹, which concluded that the playgroup needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

In particular there is a need to:

- develop further the planning to identify clearly the full learning potential in the activities and use this information to guide the staff more closely in their work with the children;
- ensure there is a more systematic approach to recording the children's progress and development and to using the information to inform the planning; and
- ensure a consistently high quality of staff interaction with the children is sustained to promote concentrated play and extend the learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The ETI carried out two interim visits on 25 September 2015 and 14 March 2016 and a follow-up inspection on 3 February 2017.

In the interval since the initial inspection the following actions or changes which affect the work of the playgroup include:

- the appointment of a new member of staff;
- newly acquired support of an early years adviser from the Early Years Organisation (EYO);
- participation by the staff in a wide range of professional development opportunities;
- additional funding from the Department of Education (DE) Getting Ready to Learn initiative which has provided resources to introduce the Big Bedtime Read;
- the acquisition of outdoor play resources; and
- visits by the staff to other playgroups.

Key findings

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now very good. The development plan and associated action plans were reviewed to take account of the initial inspection findings and guide the staff effectively in an appropriately paced improvement process. The staff and management committee have acted upon the effective and focused advice of the early year's specialist; there is evidence that the actions are having a positive impact on the overall quality of the provision in the playgroup and has raised staff confidence. At the time of the follow-up inspection all of the staff and the relevant members of the management committee had undertaken safeguarding training.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-little-acorns-playgroup-coagh-co-tyrone.pdf>

The quality of learning and teaching is now very good. At the time of the follow-up inspection the staff interactions were of a consistently high standard; the staff build effectively on the children's ideas, interests and ideas and as a result the children are very well settled and engage in concentrated and co-operative play. Improved access to additional resources in the playroom ensures the children sustain their interest in activities and develop well their independence and free choice. The written planning effectively identifies progression and promotes a wide range of learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion and development of early language and mathematical skills are particular strengths of the provision. The staff know the children well and the key worker system ensures the children's progress is being tracked systematically; the staff's skill in using observation and assessment to inform future learning is developing well. A significant improvement since the original inspection has been the development of the outdoor play area that is now used very effectively to develop the children physical skills and provide a wider range of learning opportunities.

The standards and achievements are now very good. During the follow-up inspection there were many instances when the children were engaged in purposeful and sustained play provided within meaningful contexts. The group story session, including the use of songs and rhymes, is used very effectively to develop the children's talking and listening skills, and develop the children's early mathematical concepts. The children make independent choices of activities and resources; at snack time the routine provides well conceived opportunities for further learning and encourages children to attend to their own needs. The children recognise their own names and apply them to their work; several children are able to write their names on their work.

Overall effectiveness

Little Acorns Playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained self-improvement in the interest of all the children. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk