

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Little Hands Pre-school, Antrim

Voluntary Playgroup, DE Ref No 3AB-0350

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in October 2022



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Department of Education
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Follow-up to the inspection of Little Hands Pre-school, Antrim, BT41 1AJ (3AB-0350)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Little Hands Pre-school in October 2018¹, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address the important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- improve the quality of planning and observation of children's learning; and
- develop rigorous self-evaluation and associated action planning, in order to bring about, improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

The school's action plans were of a good quality. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in November 2019 and a monitoring visit in October 2021.

In the interval since the inspection, the pre-school has received external support from an Independent Early Years Advisor in relation to the layout of the indoor and outdoor learning environments and the development of planning and self-evaluation processes.

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 new staff members, including a new leader in September 2020;
- the leader reviewing consultation methods with staff and parents for communication and consultation; and
- the staff and management committee engaged in relevant training, such as, developing art in early years, early mathematics, planning and self-evaluation, and leading and managing.

¹ [Pre-School Inspection - Little Hands Pre-school, Antrim | Education Training Inspectorate \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk)

Key findings

The outcomes for learners are now good. Most of the children have a good awareness of early mathematical concepts and use appropriate language relating to number, shape and measures naturally during their play. The children's curiosity, concentration and perseverance are developing well through investigative play at the mud kitchen and sand area. Most of the children use the range of available art tools and materials confidently and skilfully to create their own artwork and playdough models; a significant minority of these show very good progress for the time of year. Almost all of the children manage well the routines of the day and are developing appropriate social skills during snack time.

The quality of provision is now good. Open-ended questions are used well by the staff to stimulate the children's thinking and extend their vocabulary. The staff collate observations and assessments of the children's learning and take account of their interests and progress, to inform the planned programme. There is appropriate short and long-term planning in place for all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have identified appropriately, as a priority, the further development of the medium-term planning. The new layout in the outdoor environment and the improved planning for outdoor play enhances the children's learning experiences and investigative play. The writing of individual education plans has been reviewed and improved; there are now more rigorous processes in place for monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. The staff have a good understanding of the how to use self-evaluation effectively and as a result have put in place an appropriate development plan and supporting action plans. Although the staff can articulate the impact of the improvement work with confidence and clarity, this is not recorded consistently in order to document the positive impact on the children's learning. The management committee supports the staff well in their work and there is a manageable system in place for updating and ratifying policies.

Overall effectiveness

Little Hands Pre-school now demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the pre-school sustains improvement in:

- embedding the use of effective self-evaluation processes to monitor and evaluate the impact of ongoing development work in raising further the quality of provision and the outcomes for learners.

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