

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Little Sunbeams Playgroup,
Saintfield, County Down

Report of a Follow-up inspection
in December 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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CUSTOMER
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LITTLE SUNBEAMS PLAYGROUP, SAINTFIELD (4BB-0470)

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

The areas for improvement included the need to develop:

- the process of self-evaluation;
- the World Around Us aspect of the programme to heighten the children's curiosity in, and exploration of, a wide range of resources and topics; and,
- further the planning to outline more clearly the learning inherent in the activities and to make greater use of observation and evaluations when planning to meet the needs of all the children.

The ETI carried out interim follow-up visits in October 2015 and May 2016 with a follow-up inspection in December 2016.

The action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI.

Since the initial inspection, the following actions or changes have taken place:

- The management committee was reconstituted, including the appointment of a new chairperson.
- The management committee provided additional time each week for the staff to plan together and engage in self-evaluation.
- The staff received very good support from the early years specialist and engaged in a range of professional development opportunities, implementing a new planning format and reviewing their assessment practices.
- The leader acquired level 5 accreditation.

Key Findings

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The staff are developing well their understanding of self-evaluation through appropriate professional development opportunities, and have constructed action plans focused on improving the provision for the children. Recent improvements have led to a wider range of opportunities for the children to engage in meaningful mark-making and increased engagement with parents through the 'Stay and Play' mornings.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-little-sunbeams-playgroup-saintfield-co-down.pdf>

The quality of learning and teaching is now good. Recently-revised planning is informed by regular observations of the children and is differentiated. All children access a programme that is developmentally appropriate, broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge of the World around them. The staff interactions are consistently effective or highly effective. Going forward, it will be important for the staff to ensure that the outdoor play provision enables all six areas of the pre-school curriculum.

The standards and achievements are now very good. The children settle quickly to their chosen tasks and play happily alongside, and with, their peers in productive play. Particular strengths include: the children's very good levels of independence; their interest in books and engagement in mark-making; and the very good quality of representational drawing from direct observation.

Overall Effectiveness

Little Sunbeams Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement in the outdoor provision through self-evaluation and effective action planning.

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