

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mount St Nicholas Pre-school
Playgroup, Carrickfergus,
County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of a Follow-up inspection
in October 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF MOUNT ST NICHOLAS PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, CARRICKFERGUS, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT38 8AT (3AB-0087)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Mount St Nicholas Pre-school Playgroup¹ in May 2017, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all learners.

The pre-school's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The pre-school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2017 and a follow up inspection in October 2018.

In the interval since the initial inspection, there was an absence of external support for several months, after which the pre-school received external support provided by an early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation, in relation to: planning, observations and staff interactions. The staff also accessed training through the 'Learning to Learn' initiative. 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 school include:

- a new chairperson for the committee has been appointed;
- relevant policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated;
- the pre-school has received additional funding to implement elements of the Learning to learn initiative with parents.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners are now good. The children are well settled and engage in purposeful play throughout the session. They co-operate well with the daily routines, access and explore resources with independence, and develop their own creative ideas in their art work and use of construction materials.

The quality of provision is now good. The overall planned programme provides a range of experiences that are well matched to the need of the children. The planning, which identifies clearly the role of the adult, is implemented effectively by the whole staff team. The staff interactions support well the children's independence, language skills, thinking skills and the development of their own ideas. The learning experiences in the large hall remain too limited and there are insufficient planned experiences for the development of music, rhyme and rhythm.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. There is effective communication and a collaborative approach to improvement between the committee, the staff and the early year's specialist. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the action plans are focused on improvements in the daily provision and the outcomes for the children. The training and guidance provided by the early years specialist has contributed well to increasing the staff confidence and capacity to track children's progress in learning and plan for their needs. The links with parents are developing well through participation in the Learning to Learn initiative.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-mount-st-nicholas-preschool-playgroup-carrickfergus-county-antrim-3bb-0087.pdf>

Overall effectiveness

Mount St Nicholas Pre-school Playgroup 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:

- improving the range of quality learning experiences for the children in the large hall;
- planning more effectively for the development of music, rhyme and rhythm; and
- embedding the improvements made during the follow up process.

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