

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Round Tower Community
Playgroup, Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of an Follow-up Inspection
in February 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ROUND TOWER COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, ANTRIM (3BB-0536)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Round Tower Community Playgroup in May 2012 which concluded that the playgroup needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners¹. There was a first follow-up inspection in June 2013² and the inspection outcome did not improve.

In March 2015³ a second follow-up inspection concluded that the playgroup still had important areas for improvement which it needed to address in the interest of all the learners. The inspection identified the need to:

- plan for further progression in the children's learning experiences across the curriculum and, in particular, the physical play and outdoor learning;
- develop the skill and understanding of the leader and staff team in developing a systematic and effective approach to assessing the children's progress and matching this information to inform the planning process;
- develop effective links and good working relationships with the adjoining primary school; and
- identify and develop the necessary leadership skills of the leader and deputy leader and establish a robust management structure which is well informed and focused on effective strategic self-evaluation leading to the necessary improvements.

The action plans completed following the second follow-up inspection were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI during the interim visits. The Education and Training inspectorate (ETI) carried out two monitoring visits in October 2015 and May 2016 with a third follow-up inspection on 21 February 2017.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following key actions which affect the work of the playgroup have taken place:

- a new leader was employed, a new management committee constituted and a new chairperson appointed;
- key development work was undertaken to improve the quality of the provision and leadership and management; and
- the playgroup staff received training, guidance and support from an early years specialist.

Key findings

The children's outcomes are now good. The children settle enthusiastically to their chosen tasks and spend lengthy periods in sustained and productive play. Overall, the children are developing well their self-reliance and disposition to learn and are making good or better progress across most aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/general-inspection-round-tower-community-playgroup-antrim>

² <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-round-tower-community-playgroup-antrim>

³ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-round-tower-community-playgroup-antrim-0>

The quality of the provision is now good. The staff and the management committee have a better shared understanding of progression in the children's programme for learning and the need for the planning to be informed by careful observation and assessment of the children's stages of development. The interaction of adults and children is consistently effective in promoting language and learning. The adults make good use of the play activities, including energetic physical play, daily routines, songs and stories to promote the children's learning across the pre-school curriculum and to develop the children's language in context.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. This is reflected in the more defined roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the leadership and management of the playgroup. The leader and staff team have a clear shared vision for the continuous improvement of the playgroup and work closely with the management committee and the adjoining primary school to plan strategically to enhance the quality of the children's learning experiences. There is effective communication at all levels and accurate identification of the playgroup's strengths and areas for improvement including, for example, the need to refine and embed further the self-evaluation and planning. Overall, the staff are more reflective in their practice; their evaluations of the improvement work brings benefits to the children.

Overall effectiveness

Round Tower Community Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the playgroup sustains the improvements in leadership and management and the quality of provision made to date.

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