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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Springfield Primary School Playgroup
Belfast**

January 2008

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUP, BELFAST, BT12 7DJ (1AB-0531)

The inspection in November 2006 highlighted strengths in the ethos and the quality of much of the staff's interaction with the children, and identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the need for the staff interaction to be more consistently of a high quality; and
- the improvement of the staff's skill in using the children's assessment records to meet their individual needs.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the pre-school centre has taken place.

- The number of funded pre-school children has increased from 9 to 14.
- The centre has opened an afternoon session which younger children can attend.
- The morning session now includes the provision of a healthy lunch for the children as a result of funding accessed through the Awards For All initiative.
- New furniture and play resources have been purchased using funding from several external sources.
- The staff have attended some relevant training; the leader is due to complete additional training in child protection.
- A new member of staff was appointed and took up post in November 2007.
- Key policies have been reviewed and updated and appropriate additional policies identified for development.
- The pre-school group makes use of the library facilities within the primary school.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a series of inspection visits to the centre as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visit on 30 January 2008 and also takes account of the findings of the visit on 18 January 2008.

The pre-school centre has an action plan which has been developed as a result of the inspection findings. The leader and early years specialist (EYS) are in the process of drafting a comprehensive development plan to inform future work.

The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group.

- The additional resources and revised room layout enhance the quality of the learning environment and the range of learning experiences for the children.
- The children demonstrate improved listening skills and a greater interest in books and early-marking.
- There are better opportunities for the children to develop their imaginative play and their own creative ideas.

- The staff make more use of the play activities, story and daily routines to promote early mathematical language and ideas.
- There are better opportunities for the parents to meet regularly with the staff to discuss their children's progress.
- The leader has worked hard, along with the EYS, to bring about significant improvement in the overall quality of the children's experiences and learning.

The areas which need further improvement include the need to:

- continue to support and develop, through an appropriate induction programme, the professional early years skill of the recently appointed staff;
- continue to work closely with the EYS to develop further the assessment methods; and
- access training for the staff in supporting children with special educational needs.

Since the inspection, the pre-school centre, with the help of the EYS, has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for continuous development focus more strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

Good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection but some minor areas still require improvement. The organisation is developing a process of self-evaluation which leads to improvement.

The pre-school centre's progress in the minor areas for improvement will be followed-up by the District Inspector.

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