

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



St Louis Playgroup, Ballymena, County Antrim

Voluntary Playgroup DE Ref No (3AB-0089)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST LOUIS PLAYGROUP, BALLYMENA, BT43 6JB (3AB-0089)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Louis Playgroup¹ in February 2018 which concluded that the playgroup needed to address important areas for improvement the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement were:

- to use the staff's observations and assessments more systematically to inform the planning for learning;
- to take greater account of and built effectively on the guidance and support provided by the early years specialist; and
- for the leadership and management to develop and embed the self-evaluation and development planning to bring about further improvement.

The playgroup's action plan was of a good quality. A new three-year development plan was produced in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in October 2018 and a follow-up inspection in May 2019.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the playgroup has received external support provided by an early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation, in relation to: using observations and assessments to inform planning; and, self-evaluation and development planning. 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 playgroup include:

- a new early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) started working with the playgroup in March 2018;
- the chair of the management committee successfully completed the registration process; and
- all key policies are now reviewed and ratified annually.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners remain good. The children respond enthusiastically to the songs and rhymes and use a range of percussion instruments to accompany themselves singing. Most of the children who have been identified with additional learning needs are well integrated and are making progress in their learning.

The quality of provision remains good. The staff make daily evaluations of the children's learning and responses to the planned activities. In the best practice, good use is made of the evaluations, along with the observations of individual children, to inform future planning and meet more effectively the needs and interests of all of the children; however, this practice is not yet consistent enough. As a result of the focus on early mathematics, the staff are more

¹ [Pre-School Inspection - St Louis Pre-School, Ballymena, County Antrim | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

confident in promoting and developing mathematical language and concepts incidentally across all areas of play. The opportunities for problem-solving and investigative activities, although improved, still do not provide sufficient challenge. The recent introduction of planning for outdoor play and more effective use of the outdoor space, has begun to impact positively on the quality of staff interactions and the learning opportunities for the children.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. The staff work well collaboratively with the new early year's specialist who has provided very good support. As a result, the staff have a greater understanding of self-evaluation and the development planning process. They have used a self-evaluative tool along with audits of provision to identify appropriate priorities for the new three-year development plan. While the staff now use a wider range of evidence to monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions to promote improvement, this work needs to be embedded further.

Overall effectiveness

St Louis Playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement in:

- developing further the planning and provision for outdoor play; and
- embedding the self-evaluation and development planning processes to bring about further improvements in the quality of provision and the outcomes for learning.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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