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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Little Sunbeams Playgroup
Saintfield**

February 2011

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LITTLE SUNBEAMS PLAYGROUP, SAINTFIELD, CO DOWN, BT24 7JD (4BB-0470)

The inspection of the Little Sunbeams Playgroup in May 2009 highlighted strengths in the playgroup's ethos, the attention given to the promotion of the personal, social and emotional development and in developing the children's language and creative ideas. The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the need to review the planning to ensure the learning potential of all the activities is exploited more fully and the experiences provided for the children progress steadily; and
- to improve the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the playgroup have taken place:

- all of the staff have attended training on child protection relevant to their position of responsibility within the playgroup; and
- the playgroup has had a number of changes in early years specialist (EYS) support provided by the Early Years Organisation; overall the level of support provided for the staff has been limited and unacceptable.

A new permanent EYS has recently been appointed to the playgroup. It will be important that the playgroup's staff are provided with regular and targeted support if the necessary improvements required within the playgroup are to be met effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a monitoring visit in 2010, and a follow-up inspection on 16 February 2011.

The action plan produced by the centre in response to the 2009 inspection findings was of a satisfactory quality.

Good progress has been made in improving the quality of the staff's interaction with the children whilst satisfactory improvement has been made in planning the programme.

The following are the most important improvements since the inspection:

- the staff are more focused on developing the learning to be promoted through the planned activities;
- the staff are using a new format and are developing the methods of planning the programme; and
- the staff have begun to evaluate the quality of the programme provided.

The areas which require further improvement are:

- the planning needs to highlight more fully the learning potential of the activities; and

- the staff need to develop a more systematic method of recording the observations of the children's responses to the planned activities and use the information more effectively to inform future planning.

The playgroup does not have an elected management committee and therefore does not currently meet the requirements as set out by the Department of Education for groups receiving funding as part of the Pre-School Expansion Programme (1998).

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup remains satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision.

The playgroup has demonstrated evidence of improvement but significant areas for improvement in learning and teaching remain to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the playgroup's progress in addressing the remaining area for improvement.

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