



*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

**Stepping Stones Crèche
Coleraine**

April 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF STEPPING STONES CRÈCHE, COLERAINE, CO LONDONDERRY, BT52 1SA (3CA-0486)

The inspection of the in Stepping Stones Crèche pre-school group, in October 2008, highlighted strengths in the ethos and also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the planning and assessment methods;
- the staff 's understanding of how to promote learning through the play activities;
- the need to raise expectations of the children's capabilities and provide more challenge and progression in their learning; and
- the quality of the support provided by the centre's early years specialist (EYS).

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the centre have taken place.

- There have been three changes of EYS providing support to the centre. The current EYS from the Early Years Organisation took up post in July 2011.
- There has been regular discontinuity of staffing within the pre-school room due to periods of extended leave.
- The pre-school group moved for an extended period of time to temporary accommodation while essential maintenance work was carried out on the building.
- The staff have attended relevant training and visited two funded pre-school settings to enhance their own professional development.
- Additional resources have been purchased.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried an interim monitoring visit in January 2012 and a follow-up inspection on the 19 April 2012. At the time of the final follow-up visit an assistant was acting up as the room leader and the centre's deputy manager had been deployed as a part of the pre-school team.

The action plan received by the Department of Education following the inspection was of a satisfactory quality. Evidence from the initial interim visit indicated that the overall quality of provision had deteriorated since the original inspection. A second action plan was submitted addressing the areas for improvement identified both at the original inspection and during the interim visit.

Good progress has now been made in the areas of improvement identified during the original inspection and during the interim follow up visit. This has had a positive impact on the overall quality of the provision.

The following are the most important improvements since the original inspection:

- the staff demonstrate a greater understanding of the six areas of learning as set out in the pre-school curricular guidance document;

- the overall quality of the staff's interaction with the children is much higher;
- the staff build more effectively on the children's own ideas, support their independence and use appropriate open ended questions more effectively to extend the children's language and learning;
- the children demonstrate higher levels of concentrated play, investigation, creativity and an interest in mark making and emergent writing;
- the children are more effectively involved in the daily routines;
- the provision for all areas of the pre-school curriculum has improved from satisfactory to good or very good during the indoor play sessions; and
- the provision of more richly resourced areas for play encourage longer periods of sustained and purposeful play by the children.

The areas which need continued improvement are the need to:

- develop the skill of the staff to use the assessment information they gather to tailor the programme to the individual needs of children; and
- continue to develop the range of resources and learning opportunities provided during outdoor play.

It will be important for the management committee, the EYS and centre's manager to work collaboratively to support the new staff team and ensure that the very good progress made in recent months is sustained and developed further.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education and pastoral care provided by this centre is now good. The centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow up inspection has identified that some aspects of the original areas for improvement still need to be addressed but equally the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address these.

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