

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Chirpy Chicks Pre-school Playgroup,
Greyabbey, County Down

Private Day Nursery, DE Ref No 4AB-0283

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in November 2022



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Follow-up to the inspection of Chirpy Chicks Pre-school Playgroup, BT22 2QH (4AB-0283)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Chirpy Chicks Pre-school Playgroup in October 2019¹, which concluded that the playgroup needed to address the important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- develop the planning for the curriculum to ensure that it is developmentally appropriate and that the staff exploit more fully the learning potential of the activities to extend the children's learning; and
- improve the staff's understanding and use of self-evaluation to inform the development planning process and bring about further improvement in the quality of the provision and the children's outcomes.

The pre-school's action plans were adjusted in response to the feedback given by the ETI. The pre-school's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit on 21 October 2021 and a follow-up inspection on 29 November 2022.

In the interval since the inspection, and following feedback provided at the time of the monitoring visit in October 2021, the setting has not accessed external guidance and training from an early years specialist.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school include the:

- lack of directorship/management for five months; and
- appointment of a new assistant.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners have now important areas for improvement.

The children are making insufficient progress in their learning for the time of year. Although most of the children follow the routines of the playgroup and choose independently where they wish to play, they only sustain play at their chosen area with the support of an adult. The children's early mark-marking and representational drawing is underdeveloped. A small number of children use early mathematical language associated with number only; they make limited reference to other early mathematical concepts such as quantity, shape and size. A significant minority of the children have a keen interest in books which they access independently and share with staff. A majority of children listen attentively to the story during the group time.

¹ [Pre-School Inspection – Chirpy Chicks Pre-school Playgroup, County Down 4AB-0283 \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/pre-school-inspection-chirpy-chicks-pre-school-playgroup-county-down-4ab-0283)

The quality of provision now requires significant improvement.

The children are insufficiently challenged and have not made the expected progress for the time of year in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The cycle of planning, observation and assessment is underdeveloped. It does not focus sufficiently on the intended learning and fails to reflect consistently the pre-school curricular guidance. The short-term planning does not guide the staff effectively in their day-to-day interactions with the children. While all staff make regular observations of the children's learning, these do not inform the planning process and promote progression in the children's learning and outcomes. The staff have good relationships with the children and have created a positive and nurturing learning environment.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement now require significant improvement.

The absence of strategic leadership and permanent staffing has impacted negatively on self-evaluation and quality improvement work. There are no processes in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. The staff do not have a shared understanding of how to use self-evaluation to bring about the necessary improvement across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and improve the outcomes of the children. The staff have identified appropriately the need to access external support from an early years specialist.

Overall effectiveness

Chirpy Chicks Pre-school Playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The organisation requires external support to do so. The follow-up inspection has identified the need for staff to:

- develop their understanding of the pre-school curriculum to provide the children with appropriate play-based learning experiences;
- improve the quality of planning, and assessment of the pre-school programme; and
- introduce an effective process of self-evaluation and action planning that leads to improvement in the provision and outcomes for learners.

The ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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