

EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
INSPECTORATE

## PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Kilbride Playgroup, Ballyclare, County Antrim

DE Ref No 3AB-0366

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in October 2024

# Fourth follow-up to the inspection of Kilbride Playgroup, County Antrim, BT39 0SQ (3AB-0366)

## Introduction

Kilbride Playgroup is located in the village of Burnside near the small town of Ballyclare. The 14 children attending the part-time session come from the surrounding rural areas. The playroom is in a rented building with a small outdoor play area. A small number of the children in the playgroup are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). The staffing comprises a leader, deputy leader and two assistants.

The follow-up inspection was carried out in October 2024 and provided the playgroup with the opportunity to demonstrate its progress in addressing the area for action identified at the time of the last follow-up inspection in October 2023.

## Views of parents and staff

The ETI issued online confidential questionnaires to parents and staff in advance of the follow-up inspection. Seventy-one percent of parents responded to the online questionnaire; all of the responses were highly positive. In particular, the parents reported that their child is happy and well-settled in the playgroup and that the staff are helpful, friendly and approachable. In addition, just over one-quarter of the parents responded with written comments. They highlighted the excellent communication, encouraging learning environment and good progress that their child is making.

All of the staff responded positively to the online questionnaire. They appreciate their views being valued and acted upon and have benefitted from participation in staff professional learning.

## Key actions

During this period, the key actions which affect the work of the playgroup are set out below.

- There are new parent representatives on the management committee and a new member of staff has been recruited.
- The staff and the management committee have participated in a variety of professional learning opportunities to develop further their knowledge and understanding of planning, observations and self-evaluation.
- The staff have developed an assessment framework to help them monitor the children's progress in their learning through observations across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.

## Key findings

- Improvements have been made to the process of self-evaluation and development planning. The staff are now much more reflective in their practice. They have a greater understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation and use skilfully a range of evidence to identify appropriate priorities for improvement which inform the playgroup's development plan. The staff participate proactively in staff professional learning which is helping them meet both their own developmental needs and the needs of the children.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage. The staff have appropriately included the development of the provision for children identified as having special educational needs (SEN) within the development plan.
- The staff are making good use of the limited available outdoor space to facilitate the children's learning through exploring, investigating and experimenting. The recent and relevant focus on the development of energetic play has led to very positive learning experiences for the children including improving their gross motor skills, spatial awareness and balance.
- The staff have developed and greatly improved their processes for planning, observation and assessment in all areas of learning across the pre-school curriculum by creating and using effectively a framework to monitor the children's progress. This work enables the staff to make timely, appropriate adjustments to the planning to ensure that the individual needs and interests of each child are well considered.
- The conscientious staff team are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for the children, which they review regularly. Consequently, almost all of the children have very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning and are making good progress. Exploratory play is a focus in the development plan and the staff encourage the children to explore their natural surroundings. Importantly, they provide support when required, and challenge the children to extend their natural curiosity by engaging in purposeful investigative play, for example, examining the properties of autumn foliage, pumpkins, water and soil.

Area for consideration:

- the ongoing development of the provision for children identified as having SEN.

## Child Protection

At the time of the follow-up inspection, the evidence provided by the playgroup demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

## Going Forward


Through collaborative working, the prioritisation of professional learning and the improved use of the outdoor environment for developing energetic play, the staff are meeting effectively the needs of the children who attend Kilbride Playgroup. The staff have addressed appropriately the area for improvement left at the time of the original inspection and now have a much greater knowledge and understanding of robust processes for self-evaluation.

ETI will continue to monitor the progress of Kilbride Playgroup in addressing the area for consideration as laid out in this report. No further follow-up inspection is required.

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