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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

Loughinisland Community Playgroup Downpatrick

May 2008

REPORT OF A FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION IN LOUGHINISLAND COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP, DOWNPATRICK, CO DOWN, BT30 8PZ (4AB-0279)

The inspection in Loughinisland Community Playgroup, Downpatrick in March 2006 highlighted the friendly atmosphere based on very good relationships between the staff and the children; the well organised daily timetable which gave a good balance between extended periods of free play and activities organised by the staff; the good opportunities for learning in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum; the sensitive support for children with additional learning needs and the leader's caring and effective management of the centre.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key area:

- to develop more focused planning, particularly the short- and medium-term planning, which is linked effectively to the assessment of the children's responses, in order to ensure clear progression and adequate challenge in the experiences for all the children.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the pre-school centre have taken place:

- the effective leadership of the pre-school centre's leader in the development of a consistent programme of staff meetings and pre-school curriculum development meetings;
- the planning and assessment methods and the record-keeping formats have been revised and updated;
- the acquisition of additional funding for resources; and
- the early years specialists have provided appropriate guidance in helping the staff develop the quality of the planning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 27 May 2008. The pre-school centre has a development plan. It has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group.

- The staff are more confident and skilful in planning and implementing a broad and balanced pre-school programme which progresses through the year.
- The revised planning formats provide appropriate guidance for the staff in their interactions with all children. The planning identifies more clearly the role of the adult and the intended learning opportunities.
- A suitable system of assessment is being developed, based on the staff's observations of the children's responses during the play; the children's records give appropriate indications of progress and the information is linked more clearly to the planning.

- The collegial approach to planning and improvement that the highly committed staff have continued to develop and refine.
- The effective development of outdoor play which promotes greater choice and challenge in the children's learning experiences.
- The excellent leadership by the centre's leader to bring about significant improvements in the overall quality of the children's learning experiences.

Since the inspection, the pre-school centre has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection.

Very good progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are well met. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the pre-school's response to the findings of the inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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