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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**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Malone Playschool
Belfast**

February 2009

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF MALONE PLAYSCHOOL, BELFAST, CO ANTRIM, BT9 6GW (1AA-0423)

The original inspection in October 2007 highlighted strengths in the positive ethos and the varied programme being provided for the pre-school children. The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- improve the staff interaction to more consistently promote the children's thinking skills, creativity and ability to problem-solve;
- develop the written planning to guide the staff more effectively; and
- to amend information and documentation issued to parents from the pre-school to ensure it is accurate and fully comprehensive.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the pre-school has taken place:

- two new members of staff have been appointed;
- the nursery classes have re-organised to ensure that all of the children in their immediate pre-school year are together in the same class;
- new resources have been purchased to support the promotion of information communication technology (ICT), early-science, physical play and imaginary role-play;
- additional funding has been received for resources to support working with children who have additional needs; and
- the pre-school's leader has visited other pre-school settings in order to support continued professional development among the staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a monitoring visit as part of the follow-up process, and a follow-up inspection on 18 February 2009.

The action plan produced by the pre-school in response to the inspection findings was of a satisfactory quality.

The pre-school's development plan has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

Good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. The organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address a few remaining minor areas for improvement.

The following are the most important improvements since the inspection:

- the improved room layout and introduction of additional resources and natural materials is contributing to more sustained exploratory and independent play from the children;
- the break routine is being used more effectively to promote the children's independence, language and learning;
- the written planning takes more account of the role of the adult;
- the staff's interactions with the children more consistently promote the children's learning and thinking skills;
- the methods for assessment have been enhanced with the addition of photographic records of achievement and progress; and
- the children have a wider choice of activities to choose from during outdoor play.

The areas which need further improvement are as follows:

- to continue to develop further a stimulating and challenging programme for outdoor play; and
- to continue to promote creativity, exploration and investigation through the full range of play activities.

The promotion of a self-evaluative culture throughout the follow-up inspection period contributed to the improvement made, and helped the pre-school identify appropriately its priorities for future development. The inspection confirms that, through self-evaluation, the pre-school demonstrated clear evidence of improvement. Accordingly, the Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation now in place are further developed.

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

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