



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education

Department for the Economy

Department for Communities



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Playgroup
County Antrim**

March 2016

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NEWTOWNABBEY METHODIST MISSION PLAYGROUP, BELFAST (3AB-0092)

The original inspection carried out in January 2015 concluded that in most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this playgroup was satisfactory; the strengths outweighed areas for improvement in the provision.

The most important areas for improvement were to:

- improve the quality of the staff interactions to promote learning;
- develop further the planning and assessment to ensure progression in the children's learning; and
- develop further the staff's understanding of self-evaluation and development planning to promote improvement.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a monitoring visit during 2015 with a follow-up inspection in March 2016.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI during the interim visit.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the following key actions, which affect the work of the playgroup, have taken place:

- the staff have reduced the number of pre-school sessions being provided from two sessions to one morning session; and
- a dedicated outdoor play area, adjoining the playgroup, has been landscaped and resourced.

Key findings

- The staff have continued to improve their written planning; they have a better and shared understanding of progression in learning, leading to a higher expectation of what the children can achieve. The planned learning is matched to the needs and interests of the children and is implemented effectively by all of the staff.
- The overall quality of the pre-school programme has improved significantly with very good to outstanding opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children are progressing very well in their learning. The improvements are evident in the very effective development of the children's early mathematical concepts, language and communication skills and investigative and explorative skills through natural materials and the environment.
- The staff interactions to promote learning are of a very good quality. The staff are skilful in their engagement with the children during their play, both indoors and outdoors, the daily routines and when leading larger group sessions. They promote very effectively the children's social skills, language, thinking skills and learning. They read stories on request to the children encouraging their recall and prediction of the content, introduce frequently a broad range of mathematical language, encourage close observation, sustained discussions and promote an interest in print and emergent writing in meaningful role-play contexts.

- The staff have improved the systems in place to monitor and evaluate their practice. They can identify clearly their strengths and identify relevant areas for continued development. The appropriate action plans are reviewed and there is clear evidence of improvement in the areas under focus.
- The new, very attractive and well-resourced outdoor area is used very effectively to enhance significantly the children's overall learning experiences and development. The quality of the child-initiated learning through play outdoors is of a very high standard.
- The staff liaise effectively with a range of other pre-school settings as active participants in the Newtownabbey Early Education Partnership in which they share ideas and develop further their practice. They have engaged very well with all training and development opportunities available and, as a result, there is very good evidence that they have the capacity to implement change and bring about improvement in the pre-school provision.

Overall effectiveness

Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Playgroup has demonstrated a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

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