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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**



## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**of**

**Stepping Stones Playgroup  
Maghera**

**March 2015**

## **FOLLOW UP REPORT TO THE INSPECTION OF STEPPING STONES PLAYGROUP**

The inspection of Stepping Stones Playgroup in January 2014, evaluated the provision overall as satisfactory. The inspection identified the need for the playgroup to:

- review the organisation of the day to extend and improve the opportunities for sustained and productive play both indoors and outdoors; and
- ensure all areas of the pre-school curriculum are of a consistently high quality, in particular World Around Us, rhyme and rhythm and outdoor play.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out an interim follow-up visit in September 2014, and a follow up inspection on the 23 March 2015.

The action plan received by the Department of Education (DE) following the inspection was of a good quality.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the children engage for longer periods of sustained and concentrated play during the session;
- the staff are consistently skilful in promoting settled play, encouraging the children to think and solve their own problems and in modelling a wider range of language, including songs and rhymes during the play;
- the overall curriculum is of a higher quality; in particular, the children develop more effectively their imaginative and creative play and are more involved in music making, investigating materials and in using their senses;
- the transitions and organisation of the day are managed more effectively to support well the children's independence and learning;
- the staff have improved their professional capacity and expertise by attending a range of appropriate training and implement new ideas as a result;
- the staff match more effectively their planning for progression in learning to the children's stages of development;
- parents' views are sought in a more systematic way and more visitors are invited into the playgroup to enhance the children's learning; and
- the staff and the committee reflect systematically on their own practice; the evaluations of the daily practice focus on the extent of the children's learning, key strengths and relevant priority areas for continued development are identified more accurately and there is clear evidence of continuous improvement.

### **Conclusion**

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this playgroup is now good; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The playgroup is meeting effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Health and safety**

- The outdoor area located to the front of the building is not enclosed and adjoins a busy road; it continues to require significant supervision to ensure safety.

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