

Playgroup Leader Michelle Bolt
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Trustees Annual Report for September 2023- August 2024

Background and Activities

Playaway Playgroup is a registered charity providing preschool education in Islandmagee, Larne, County Antrim. The playgroup has been established within the local community for over 44 years and continues to deliver early years education to children from the surrounding area.

Playaway Playgroup operates as a cross-community organisation and currently employs five members of staff. A Parents' Management Committee governs the playgroup, comprising parents both past and present, who act as trustees and are responsible for the strategic direction, governance, and overall management of the charity. The organisation is governed by a formal constitution and operates in accordance with all required policies and procedures to meet regulatory standards.

The playgroup is registered to accommodate up to 26 children aged from 2 years and 10 months to 4 years, operating five mornings per week during term time. Sessions are delivered from the Islandmagee Community Centre.

Playaway Playgroup aims to support the educational, social, and emotional development of local preschool children in line with the Northern Ireland Department of Education curriculum. Learning is delivered through structured play-based activities designed to help children achieve their developmental milestones. These activities include water and sand play, painting, Play-Doh, arts and crafts, role play, storytelling, music, and outdoor play. The playgroup is committed to ensuring that all children are given equal opportunities to meet their learning objectives prior to commencing primary education.

Admissions and Inclusion

The admissions policy of Playaway Playgroup welcomes all families from the community regardless of social background, religion, race, culture, disability, or additional needs. The playgroup is inspected annually by the Health and Social Care Trust and Environmental Health to ensure compliance with all relevant standards. Additionally, inspections are conducted by the Education Authority, and the resulting reports are made publicly available.

Financial Position

During the 2023–2024 financial year, Playaway Playgroup did not receive any funding from the Education Authority, as there were no children meeting the required eligibility criteria for that term. An application was submitted to the Education Authority in an effort to secure funding to enable the Playgroup to remain open; however, this application was unsuccessful.

*Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup, Islandmagee Community Centre
68 Middle Road, Islandmagee, LARNE BT40 3SX
Registered Office as above, registered charity number 101115*

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As a result, the Playgroup recorded a deficit of £18,623.92 for the financial year ended 2024. Education Authority funding would normally contribute significantly towards core operating costs, including staff salaries, premises rental, insurance, and children's activities, supplemented by additional fundraising. In the absence of this funding, all income during the year was generated through fundraising efforts alone. Despite these efforts, the Playgroup still incurred a loss of £18,623.92, which reduced its reserves.

The Trustees wish to express their sincere gratitude to all parents, local businesses, and local farmers, past and present, for their generous and continued support in raising vital funds to sustain the Playgroup. The Trustees also extend their thanks to the staff, who consistently go above and beyond by providing additional support and assisting with extra activities whenever required.

For the 2024–2025 financial year, the Playgroup will receive funding from the Education Board, and enrolment numbers are expected to increase.

Signed (Michelle Bolt)

Michelle Bolt

Date

5-2-26

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