

**Independent Examiners' report to the Charity Trustees,
Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup**

**Reporting period: 1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024
(reporting on the accounts for the period ending 31 August 2024)**



Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup
Charity Status: Registered Charity Number 101115
Charity Address: Islandmagee Community Centre (Gobbins Centre), 66 Middle Road
LARNE County Antrim BT40 3SL

Trustees:

The charity is managed by a Parents' Management Committee comprising past and present parents of children attending the Playgroup.

Structure, Governance and Management:

Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup is governed by a constitution and operates in accordance with all relevant policies and procedures required by regulation. The Trustees are responsible for the overall governance, strategic direction, and financial oversight of the charity.

Objectives and Activities

Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup exists to advance education by providing high-quality preschool education to children within the Islandmagee community. The charity operates as a cross-community organisation, committed to inclusivity and equality of opportunity.

The Playgroup delivers early years education in accordance with the Early Years curriculum as prescribed by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland. Educational objectives are achieved through structured, play-based learning that supports children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Activities include water and sand play, jigsaws, painting, play-dough, arts and crafts, role play, storytelling, music, and outdoor play. These activities are designed to support children in meeting developmental milestones and preparing for transition to primary school.

The Playgroup welcomes all families irrespective of social class, religion, race, culture, disability, or additional needs, in line with its admissions policy.

Public Benefit

In setting objectives and planning activities, the Trustees have given due regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit. The Playgroup provides accessible, affordable early years education that benefits children, families, and the wider community by supporting early development and school readiness.

Achievements and Performance

Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup continues to provide a stable, nurturing, and educational environment for preschool children. During the reporting period, the Playgroup operated five mornings per week during term time and was registered to accommodate up to 26 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 4 years.

The Playgroup employed five members of staff who delivered consistent and high-quality early years provision.

The charity remained fully compliant with regulatory requirements and was subject to inspection by the Health and Social Care Trust, Environmental Health, and the Education Authority. The Trustees also worked closely with an Early Years Advisor to ensure best practice and ongoing development.

Financial Review

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.

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.

Plans for Future Periods

The Trustees intend to continue delivering high-quality early years education within the local community, maintain regulatory compliance, and invest in resources that support children's learning and development. The charity will also continue to seek grant funding and fundraising opportunities to ensure long-term sustainability.



Independent Examiner's Report

To the Trustees of Islandmagee Playaway Playgroup

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2024, which are set out on page 1.

Responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner

The Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

My responsibility is to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions issued by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions issued by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. This included a review of the accounting records and a comparison of those records with the accounts presented, along with consideration of any unusual items or disclosures and explanations provided by the Trustees.

Examiner's Statement

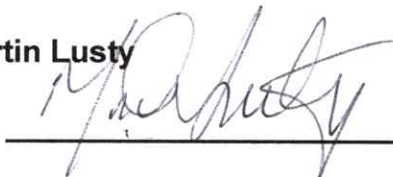
I have completed my examination and confirm that no matters have come to my attention which give cause to believe that:

1. Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act;
2. The accounts do not accord with the accounting records;
3. The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
4. Further information is required for a proper understanding of the accounts.

In accordance with the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have no matters to report.

Name Martin Lusty

Signature



Date

06-02-26

Relevant professional qualification:

Duty Manager, Gobbins Visitors Centre, Middle Road, Islandmagee BT40 3SL

