



*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**

**Dunclug Nursery School  
Ballymena**

**June 2013**

## **FOLLOW UP TO THE INSPECTION OF DUNCLUG NURSERY SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT43 6SU (311-6165)**

The inspection in Dunclug Nursery School in November 2011 highlighted strengths including the caring and inclusive ethos and the broad and balanced programme. It also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the urgent need for the Principal, supported by the NEELB and the governors, to work towards more open, trusting and confident communication and professional working relationships among the staff, in order to bring about improvements in the provision; and
- the need to develop further the planning and assessment methods in order to focus more sharply on the learning potential of the activity, the language and learning to be developed and the role of the adult.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the nursery school have taken place:

- the staff have participated in a mediation process and professional training supported by the NEELB to improve communication and working relationships;
- the school is participating in the Special Educational Needs Early Years Pilot;
- the outdoor area has been developed further with resourcing from the co-operative community funding project; and
- the assistant teacher acted up as Principal and provide effective leadership for significant periods during the follow up process.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two monitoring visits in September 2012 and March 2013 and a follow up inspection on 19 June 2013.

The action plan received by the Department of Education (DE) following the inspection was compiled and submitted in the absence of the Principal who was on a period of leave; it was of a good quality.

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

- more effective systems are in place to promote effective communication among the staff team which is now good;
- there is evidence of good working relationships among the staff team, who feel valued and more confident to contribute their skills and ideas;
- the short term planning is more detailed, focuses more sharply on the learning intentions for both indoor and outdoor play and guides the staff more effectively in their day to day practice;
- the learning environment is of a higher quality across the whole school, with well resourced, language rich areas of play;

- the teaching and learning is more consistently of a higher quality and more effectively supports the children's language development;
- the staff use the skills they have learned through the recent EYIT training to implement effective strategies for managing children's behaviour; and
- the staff are more reflective in their approaches and are all involved more fully in the whole school, improvement process.

The governors need to keep under careful review, any ongoing periods of absence by the Principal, and plan appropriately to ensure that this does not impact negatively on the improvements made and on the continuing development of the school.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by Dunclug Nursery School is now very good. The playgroup is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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