

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Banbridge Nursery School,  
Co Down

Report of an Inspection  
in December 2010

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BANBRIDGE NURSERY SCHOOL, CO DOWN  
(511-6238)**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	27	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	1	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	22.6%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.8%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>12</sub> hours	-	-

**3. Details of Staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	1	2
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	1	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	3
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

**4. Parental Questionnaires**

<b>Number issued</b>	52
Percentage returned	51.9%
Number of written comments	14

**BANBRIDGE NURSERY SCHOOL, CO DOWN, BT32 4AF (511-6238)**  
**INSPECTED: 1 DECEMBER 2010**

1. Banbridge Nursery School is situated in purpose-built accommodation in a campus which is shared with Edenderry Primary School and Banbridge Academy. Since the last inspection, the building has been considerably extended to provide a quiet room for the children, a new staff room, a larger entrance hall, a new caretaker's room and additional storage areas; other areas within the building have been re-decorated. The car-parking facilities and the outdoor play areas have also been enlarged. A new assistant teacher was appointed in September 2010 as part of a job-share arrangement.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children are well settled and display exemplary behaviour and a positive attitude to learning. The majority of the children have good levels of concentration and engage in purposeful and productive play. They make independent choices, display a keen interest in the activities and listen attentively during group sessions.

4. The majority of the children demonstrate good levels of independence in their selection of play resources, tools and materials to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional art work and participate imaginatively in the role-play opportunities provided. Most of the children are gaining a good understanding of early mathematical concepts and are developing their skills of reasoning and logic through the constructional and scientific play experiences. The children are very interested in the natural world and most handle tools very competently during indoor and outdoor activities.

5. Most of the children are articulate, engage readily with the staff and their peers and join in group discussions. During the inspection, many of the children browsed in the well-stocked book areas and perused the fiction and non-fiction reading materials incorporated in each play area. Many of the children show an interest in early writing and, during the inspection, a significant minority were observed making good use of the range of writing resources available both in discrete areas and within other areas of play, such as, the house corner and shoe shop.

**PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

6. The staff has given much thought and attention to the creation of an inviting, stimulating and ever-changing learning environment for the children. The children's work and photographs are very carefully presented using eye catching displays throughout the building.

7. The attractively presented playrooms provide excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Both playrooms are inviting and welcoming with clearly defined, well-resourced and interesting areas of play. All of the children have access to the activities presented in both playrooms; this open-plan arrangement is working very successfully and provides extended opportunities for the children to mix with a larger group of their peers and to exercise greater choice in play activities and the resources they use.

8. The children have daily access to the large outdoor area for physical play and other activities. All of the available outdoor space is used very imaginatively to create a wide range of exciting interest areas which encourage the children to investigate and share their discoveries. The school caretaker has played a major role in the production and maintenance of many of the larger pieces of physical equipment and other outdoor resources, which the children enjoy using.

9. During the inspection, there were many good examples of skilful interaction by the staff which extended the children's language and thinking skills, and also promoted the development of rich mathematical language, along with creativity, construction, investigative and problem-solving skills. The adults often join the children in their play and talk to them about their ideas, personal experiences and achievements; the staff's observations are used well to ensure that future learning activities are matched to the children's stage of development. Necessary routines such as snack time are incorporated unobtrusively into the daily timetable and promote independence.

10. The written planning clearly indicates the intended learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Individual educational plans (IEPs) and the teachers' weekly plans help to ensure that the needs of the children experiencing difficulties in learning are met and that all children are fully integrated into all aspects of the nursery programme. The children's progress is shared regularly with the parents.

11. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. Among the strengths are the warm, welcoming and child-friendly environment for both the children and their parents, the celebration of the children's achievements and progress, the ethos of mutual respect, the value placed on the children's views and the children's excellent and courteous behaviour.

12. The nursery school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

13. The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; the children have healthy daily snacks for example, and they have excellent opportunities to play outdoors where they experience a varied and progressive range of energetic physical activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

14. The Principal has given long service to the nursery; she is highly enthusiastic, motivated and provides excellent leadership for the school. She sets high standards for herself and others, provides excellent support and training for the staff and has established a culture of self-evaluation to promote continuous improvement. The Principal and the staff have worked tirelessly to improve continually the quality of the provision. The nursery has a comprehensive school development plan (SDP) with appropriate targets for improvement.

15. The Principal and staff work hard to keep parents informed of and involved in the work of the nursery school. A lending library for books, toys and 'story-boxes' has been established and parent volunteers are involved in the day-to-day organisation of this resource. The nursery has provided a range of parental workshops and parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery's self-evaluation process through the completion of questionnaires.

16. The key strengths in this nursery school include:

- the high standards achieved and the excellent progress being made by the children, and their development as independent and creative learners;
- the quality and richness of the children's experiences and the range of challenging activities offered across all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the good quality of the interaction between the staff and the children which promotes the children's self-esteem, learning and development;
- the excellent links established with the parents; and
- the outstanding leadership provided by the Principal and the supportive staff, who work well as a team to promote continuous improvement.

17. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **QUESTIONNAIRES**

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the governors and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A majority (51%) of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 14 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that almost all the parents regard the nursery very highly and appreciate:

- the caring staff who are highly concerned for the well-being of the children and their families;
- the children's achievements and the many skills they are learning through the excellent programme provided; and
- the continually developing learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

All of the responses from the governors and the staff were wholly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the nursery. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the nursery.

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