

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bangor Central Nursery
School, Co Down

Report of an Inspection
in May 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Inspection methods and evidence base	1
3.	Overall finding of the inspection	1
4.	Children's achievements	1
5.	Provision for learning	2
6.	Leadership and management	3

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BANGOR CENTRAL NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	26	0	0
Attending part-time	0	26	26
Under 3 years of age*	0	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	11	6	7
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	4	1	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	7	5	4
With English as an additional language	1	1	2

* 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.	31%
Average attendance for the previous year.	89%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	2½ hours	2½ hours

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	1
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	3
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	3
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	78
Percentage returned	69%
Number of written comments	30

1. Introduction

Bangor Central Nursery School is situated on Castle Park Road, in Bangor County Down. Since the last inspection, a new Principal and a part-time teacher have been employed. Currently, 78 children attend the school; the school operates a mixed pattern of attendance; 26 attend full-time and 52 attend on a part-time basis. The school has a considerable waiting list and will need to keep under review the pattern of attendance offered to all children. The school may need to consider offering all children a part-time place to cater for the growing needs of the area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the nursery school.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Seventy-eight questionnaires were issued to the parents and 48 were returned, 30 with additional written comments. A small number of the staff and the management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. Nearly all of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the nursery school. In particular the parents valued the helpful, caring and approachable staff and the progress in their children's learning over the year. The Governors praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for all the children. The few issues raised through the questionnaires were shared with the Governors.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Very Good
Quality of Provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- During the inspection, most of the children settled to purposeful and productive play; they also engaged in very good imaginative play during the outdoor sessions. Many of the children display a very good understanding of early mathematical language and concepts; they listen attentively during the enjoyable story and rhyme sessions and are able to play and share with each other during role play. Much of the children's art work is of a high quality and it is used very well to create colourful displays around the school.

- All of the children co-operate well with the adults and with one another. Many of the children can recognise, or write, their own names or letters within their names. The children are curious about the world around them as they explore for mini-beasts during outdoor play or experiment with the interesting range of materials within their 'treasure boxes'. Most of the children are confident, articulate and are welcoming to visitors.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The nursery's programme offers good to very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional, language and early mathematic development are particular strengths of the programme. The staff provide an excellent range of challenging and imaginative play experiences for the children in the newly developed outdoor play areas.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The relationships at all levels are very good and there are close links and good communication with the parents, local schools and appropriate support agencies.
- The organisation of the day is effectively managed to ensure routines are well established and used well to support the children's learning and skills for life. The children are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their learning.
- The quality of the staff interactions with the children is consistently of a high quality. They engage readily with the children in their play and often act as role models, prompting and encouraging extended responses from them and developing their thinking skills.
- The nursery school has a very positive ethos; there is a welcoming atmosphere and caring relationships between the staff and the children; the children appear happy and at ease with the staff. Many of the children show good concentration in their play activities; they are encouraged to become independent and to make choices and decisions for themselves and their behaviour is good.
- The written planning outlines a broad and balanced programme for the children, which is designed to foster their all-round development. It identifies many facets of learning inherent in the various aspects of play. The staff know the children well and have collated a wide range of observations of the children's responses to play. It will be important for the staff to refine the range of observation methods used and use the information more effectively in planning to meet the children's differing needs.
- The nursery school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The outdoor environment and the experiences provided for the children have been greatly enhanced and as a result the quality of the outdoor provision is very good; the children have excellent opportunities to develop a wide range of physical skills and imaginative play.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good

- The new principal demonstrates very good leadership and management skills and is a good role-model for her staff. There is a strong sense of team spirit among the hard-working and dedicated staff. There have been many important improvements in the school's work in recent years such as the improvement in the quality of the school's documentation, the purchase of new furniture and equipment, and in addition, the improvements made to the outdoor play environment.
- The nursery school has a comprehensive School Development Plan with appropriate targets for improvement. The staff have developed useful methods of self-evaluation and there is some evidence that the process has led to improvements in the children's learning experiences.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children. The arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is very good. The nursery 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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