

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Grove Nursery School,  
Armagh

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



## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
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
	Appendix – Health and safety	

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 GROVE NURSERY SCHOOL, ARMAGH

### 1. Details of Children

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

\* 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.	29%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

### 2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4¾ hours	-	-

### 3. Details of Staff

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

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

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

### 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	58%
Number of written comments	22

## 1. Introduction

Grove Nursery School is situated in Armagh city. The Principal was appointed two years ago, the remainder of the nursery staff have been in post since the last inspection in 2005. The nursery is currently oversubscribed by applications for places.

## 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.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fifty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents and thirty were returned, twenty-two with written comments. The staff and the management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with all of the aspects of the work of the nursery. The parents and the staff praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for the children.

## 3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery is good; the nursery has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the nursery has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the nursery's progress on the area for improvement.

Summary of key findings

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

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### 4. Children's achievements

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

- The children and their parents are greeted on arrival to the nursery. The children quickly settle to play; however, a significant minority of the children do not consistently sustain concentrated play throughout the day. In the best practice, the children are co-operative and all are well-behaved; they enjoy the stimulating play activities, in the excellent indoor and outdoor environment. Relationships among the children are friendly; they turn readily to the staff for support, and when given the opportunity, the majority of the children can initiate their own ideas in play and are engaged for lengthy periods of time in exploring and investigating the natural materials.

- A majority of the children need more encouragement to make choices and decisions about their own play. Most of the children are beginning to take good care of their materials and tidy-up after their activities. They are secure in their routines and are able to self-manage at the snack table pouring their own drinks and helping with the dinner routine. The staff need to build on the good interaction used at dinner time to stimulate natural conversations and learning during play.
- The children are good listeners and a small number ask questions; their early representational artwork is well-developed and they have acquired good physical and fine motor skills. The children are responsive to the adult questions; however, there were too many low-level questions which required limited or non-verbal responses and as a result the children were not consistently using language effectively to express their ideas, feeling or emotions. The children would benefit from more consistent support from all of the adults to develop further their language skills
- The children have a good mathematical awareness and can understand early concepts about size, shape and number. They enjoy imaginative play and can adopt the roles of others in the world around us.

## 5. Provision for learning

### **The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is good. The staff work hard to provide a stimulating range of play activities. They are committed to the children's all-round development and work closely with the parents and outside agencies to ensure that the children are safe and secure. The staff appropriately provide hats and sun cream for the children before outdoor play in sunny weather.
- The nursery staff have created a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children, particularly in the outdoor area, which is greatly enhanced with exciting natural and manmade materials, herbs and flowers. The children's work is; celebrated, presented attractively in the playrooms, labelled appropriately with the children's names, and annotated with text of their spoken words which is effectively developing the children's awareness of the written word.
- Good communication has been established with the parents and outside agencies to support the children identified with special needs. The staff are beginning to identify the needs of the children and are at an early stage in the implementation of the recent training to build the capacity of the staff to support the children with communication difficulties. There are effective transitional arrangements made with the local primary schools to which the children transfer to for year one.
- There are many instances where the staff build effectively on the children's interests and ideas to extend their language and learning through role play, singing, stories and rhymes. The staff do not, however, fully utilise all of the opportunities for learning from the high quality activities. It is appropriate that the staff identify the best practice in interaction between the adults and the children to continue to improve the quality of the provision for learning.

- There is a good flow to the organisation of the day and the staff provide a lengthy period of free play wherein the children are able to access stimulating play activities. The staff have worked hard to compile comprehensive thematic planning for progression in the pre-school programme and are developing the links to the assessment of the children's needs to take forward more individualised learning programmes.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and regular physical activity in the stimulating outdoor area. The attention to healthy eating and physical activity is very good. The snack and dinner routine is used well to promote the children's independence and learning.

## 6. Leadership and management

### **The quality of leadership and management is good.**

- The Principal is effectively developing a teamwork approach within the nursery and the culture for self-evaluation is at an early stage of development. It is appropriate to identify and share best practice in the nursery in order to raise further the children's standards and achievements. The Principal and staff need to keep under review the effectiveness of the monitoring of the children's progress and development and improve further the pre-school programme to meet the children's individual needs. The deployment and use of the staff within the open-plan accommodation needs to be reviewed to ensure that the children are adequately supervised at all times. The school development plan has appropriately identified areas for improvement; however, the action plans need to focus more sharply on the evidence of the children's progress and development particularly in the areas of language development.
- The staff communicate effectively with the parents through parent education programmes and newsletters, and feedback on the children's progress and development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery is good; the nursery has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the nursery has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The main areas for improvement are:

- to develop further the consistency and effectiveness of the staff interaction to encourage the children to express their own ideas, feelings and emotions and to promote high quality learning; and
- to develop further the processes for self-evaluation and development planning.

The inspectorate will monitor the nursery's progress on the area for improvement.

**Health and safety**

- The unsupervised use of the climbing frame by the children needs to be risk assessed by the staff to manage any potential risk to the children.
- The risk assessment for the children's access to the guinea pigs in the classroom does not fully address all of the potential risks and requires further development to include how these risks will be managed by the staff.



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