

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Hope Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2013

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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 HOPE NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	1	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	7	5
At CoP stages 3 or 4**		
At CoP stages 1 or 2**		
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.	60%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

2. Duration of Sessions

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

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	61.5%
Number of written comments	21

1. Introduction

Hope Nursery School is situated in the lower Shankill Road area in West Belfast. Sixty per cent of the children are entitled to free schools meals.

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-two were returned, twenty one with additional 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 the work of the nursery school. In particular the parents valued the helpful, caring and approachable staff and the high quality of the learning environment. The Board of Governors praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for all the children currently and over many years of civil unrest in the area.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

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

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is outstanding.

- Almost all of the children settle quickly on arrival in the nursery and set about exploring and investigating the wide range of stimulating activities available to them. The quality of the children's work is often of a very high standard and most of their paintings and models are close and detailed representations of the world around them as they see it. They display high levels of independence and self esteem and, when asked, are happy to discuss and explain their work. The staff are skilful in their interactions with the children and provide opportunities that arouse the children's interest and curiosity and promote sustained, purposeful and productive play.

- The staff place much emphasis on developing the children's personal, social, emotional and language development and, as a result, the children are confident in expressing their feelings and show a high regard for the views and opinions of others and their environment. During the inspection the staff facilitated opportunities for the children to engage in very good imaginative role play which was based on their own ideas and suggestions of personal experiences outside the nursery environment. The children display a very good understanding of early mathematical language and can apply this in the correct context.
- The literacy rich environment ensures that the children have excellent opportunities to develop their early writing skills and a keen interest in books. The majority of the children can recognise and attempt to write, or form letters, in their own name. They clearly enjoy stories and enjoy browsing through the many books located around the nursery. During story and group sessions the children demonstrate very good listening skills and can contribute well to discussions and join in songs and rhymes enthusiastically.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. A friendly caring atmosphere based on mutual respect permeates the nursery and the relationships at all levels are excellent. The staff present the learning environment both indoors and outdoors to a very high standard and every opportunity is used very effectively to promote language and learning across the pre-school curriculum. The behaviour of the children is exemplary.
- The organisation of the day is effectively managed to ensure routines are well established and transitions between activities and key times are smooth. The children are encouraged to be actively involved in their learning and the staff value their contributions by offering praise and encouragement for effort.
- The quality of the staff interactions with the children are consistently of a very 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 children's ideas and interests are built upon and are often incorporated into the planning of the programme.
- The staff make excellent use of the children's art work and topical displays to enhance the learning environment and the resources are presented in an attractive manner to arouse curiosity and encourage the children to explore and investigate all areas of the nursery. The provision of real life and natural resources helps to develop the children's sense of resourcefulness and inquisitiveness and enhance the quality of the provision and outcomes for the children. The children have good opportunities to use technology to further their learning experiences.

- The staff plan a varied and progressively challenging programme throughout the year. They use the information gained from their first hand knowledge of the children and observations of their responses to make appropriate adjustments to the planning to ensure that individual needs and interests are very well catered for. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and appropriate advice and guidance is sought to address their needs. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and are provided with regular information on their progress.
- The nursery school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The nursery's recent success in a national competition has greatly enhanced the quality of the outdoor environment and the experiences provided for the children. As a result the children have excellent opportunities to develop a wide range of physical skills.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding

- The Principal provides outstanding leadership. She is very well supported in her leadership role by the hard working, skilled and dedicated staff who all contribute to the high quality of the provision. The staff and governors have a shared vision for the future development of the school.
- The School Development Planning process provides an excellent basis for the strategic development of the nursery. The associated action plans provide an appropriately paced and prioritised approach to the implementation of the identified priorities which are based firmly on improving the learning outcomes for all the children.
- The nursery, under the clear guidance of the principal, engages in extensive and effective links with parents, external agencies, local primary and nursery schools for the benefit of the children.
- 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 outstanding; the quality of the pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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