

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Omagh North Nursery School,  
Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2011

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON OMAGH NORTH NURSERY SCHOOL, CO TYRONE  
(211-6265)**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>	<b>Class 3</b>
Attending full-time	26	0	0
Attending part-time	0	24	26
Under 3 years of age*	0	0	13
With statement of special educational needs	0	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	2 Welcome Centre	2 Welcome Centre
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3	6	6
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	6	1	4
With English as an additional language	0	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.	34%
Average attendance for the previous year.	86%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4½ hours	2½ hours	2½ hours

**3. Details of Staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	2	1
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	1
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	72
Percentage returned	57%
Number of written comments	29

**OMAGH NORTH NURSERY SCHOOL, OMAGH, CO TYRONE, BT79 7EG (211-6265)**  
**INSPECTED: 19 MAY 2011**

1. Omagh North Nursery School is situated in the grounds of Gibson Primary School, Omagh. The children come from the town and surrounding area. The Principal, who teaches the morning part-time class, and one assistant teacher, who teaches the full-time class, have been in post for several years; a third part-time teacher, who is a beginning teacher, has recently been appointed to teach the afternoon part-time class.

2. In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the nursery school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the nursery school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children's ages and stages of development are wide ranging. Most of the children have almost completed their pre-school year; yet, a significant majority of them remain unsettled and do not engage in productive play or learning. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is not monitored sufficiently well and the children are not given good enough support to learn to play in a settled and concentrated manner. The staff do not implement consistent and agreed strategies for behaviour management to enable the children to learn in a secure environment. During the inspection, in the best practice, a significant minority of the children settled well and worked independently and collaboratively to create interesting models, and to develop good physical and investigative skills. Overall, the children's achievements are inadequate.

4. The children's language skills range from those that are well-developed to under-developed. During the inspection, the parents were encouraged to select a library book with their child and take it home to read together. A small number of children were observed enjoying stories read by the staff during play while a few individual children browsed in the books provided. The teaching strategies which are employed do not address the developmental and language needs of all the children and improve the standards of their language; for example, the children's listening skills are not sufficiently well developed and the story sessions for the whole-class groups are not matched closely enough to the language needs and interests of all of the children.

### **PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. The staff have worked hard to create a stimulating learning environment and there are many interesting displays of the children's art work and photographs. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are stimulating and attractive with a very good range of resources enhanced by authentic materials, for example, real cups and saucers and cutlery.

6. The nursery school classes are accommodated in a purpose-built building which consists mainly of two classrooms separated in part by a retractable wall and a shared enclosed veranda with access to a large outdoor area. At the time of the inspection, the children from the three classes were not given any opportunities to share the available space or to play together in order to build wider friendship circles. The available space for learning is not used effectively to ensure that all the children have opportunities to socialise and experience a broader range of activities.

7. The nursery school provides a pre-school programme that offers satisfactory to good opportunities for learning across the pre-school curriculum; however, the learning and teaching potential is too often under-developed to meet the children's individual needs. The assessment of, and for, the children's learning is inadequate and is not linked closely enough with the planned programme in order to plan for progression in the children's learning. In addition, the members of staff do not have sufficiently high expectations in relation to the most able children and do not provide appropriately challenging activities matched to their abilities and needs.

8. During the inspection, the quality of the interaction observed between the staff and the children was satisfactory and occasionally good. In the good practice, the staff listened and responded to the children's ideas and developed effectively their language and thinking skills. In the satisfactory practice, the staff often initiated ideas for learning arising from the activities provided, but on too many occasions they missed opportunities to sustain the children's interest and avail fully of the learning potential for emotional, social and language development.

9. The daily timetable provides an appropriate balance of free play and activities organised by the staff; however, insufficient use is made of the outdoor area for outdoor learning experiences and to provide the children with increased opportunities for physical activity. In addition, the learning from the daily routines and activities is not used well enough to extend the children's decision-making skills and sense of responsibility for the care of the play materials.

10. Four children attend the Welcome Centre, situated in the neighbouring primary school, for four days each week; the teachers report that these children often find it difficult to settle when they attend the nursery school for a part-time session each Friday. The nursery school's records, the children's individual education plans and discussions held during the inspection all indicate that insufficient information has been exchanged regarding the support provided or needed for these children and the progress they are making. The nursery school's special education needs register indicates that an additional number of children have also been identified as experiencing difficulties with the development of their speech and language skills; there has been limited external support for these children. While one classroom assistant has recently availed of training relating to the Eklon Programme, there has been insufficient training provided for the staff to develop their ability to support these children through the day-to-day work of the nursery school.

11. There are good working relationships with almost all the parents. The parents are appropriately involved at the beginning and end of each session; the staff effectively interacts with them informally in a friendly manner but do not share sufficiently well appropriate information about the curriculum and the children's achievements.

12. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery school is satisfactory. The staff treats the children with care and provides a welcoming environment which is helping most of the children to develop confidence.

13. The nursery school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following minor areas need to be addressed: for example, a written personal care policy needs to be developed by the staff, ratified by the Board of Governors (governors) and shared with the parents and, in addition, the relevant governors responsible for child protection need to be trained in safeguarding arrangements.

14. The nursery school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, during the inspection the children were provided with a healthy snack of milk, brown bread and pieces of banana. The outdoor provision encourages the children to adopt healthier lifestyles and to engage in some energetic play.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

15. The leadership and management of the nursery school are inadequate. The Principal needs to ensure a more effective strategic approach to the leadership of the nursery curriculum development through the consistent management and organisation of the routines and the planning for, and assessment of, learning in all the classes. In addition, there is a need for a systematic whole-school review of the policies and procedures that guide the management of the nursery school.

16. There is an outline three year development plan and action plans to improve the nursery provision which appropriately identify the need to develop further the safeguarding arrangements and the outdoor play provision. The existing approach to development planning is not sufficiently strategic and rigorous; the nursery school's improvement process is not effective. The Principal and other members of staff attend a wide range of courses and conferences; there is not an appropriate team-working approach to the dissemination of the information and knowledge gained at these courses, nor is there any evaluation of the impact that their attendance at these courses is having on the children's overall learning, curriculum development and school improvement. There is insufficient evidence that the processes for self-evaluation are effectively leading to improvement.

17. The key strengths in this nursery include:

- the purpose-built nursery school accommodation and range of good quality resources;
- the instances of good quality teaching observed during the inspection that effectively promoted the children's creative and investigative skills and resulted in settled, purposeful play; and
- the good working relationships established with almost all of the parents.

18. The areas for improvement include the need:

- to develop further the planning and assessment methods in order to meet the children's individual needs and to raise their standards and achievements in all areas of learning;
- to promote more fully the children's settled and concentrated play through sustained interaction between the staff and the children; and
- to develop the effectiveness of the Principal's leadership and management in order to improve, and consistently maintain, the quality of the learning and teaching.

19. In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the nursery school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

**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 (57%) of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 29 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that almost all the parents regard the nursery school very highly and appreciate the caring staff who contributes to the development of the children's confidence and learning. All of the responses from the governors and the staff were positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the nursery school. A few additional comments from the parents raised queries about the children's settling-in arrangements and communications between the nursery school and home about the nursery provision. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the nursery school.

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