

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Shaftesbury Nursery School,  
Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2011

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SHAFTESBURY NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST  
(111-0038)**

**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*	11	7
With a statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	4	5
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	4	5
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	1	1
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.	59%
Average attendance for the previous year.	85%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> hours	N/A	N/A

**3. Details of Staff**

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

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	9
Trainees	0

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

**4. Parental Questionnaires**

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	28.9%
Number of written comments	8

**SHAFTESBURY NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT13 2HS (111-0038)**  
**INSPECTED: 10 JANUARY 2011**

1. Shaftesbury Nursery School is situated in the greater Shankhill area on Percy Street, Belfast. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to the staffing including a new assistant teacher and an additional classroom assistant. There have been two changes of Principal during this period; the current Principal was appointed and took up post in 2007. There has recently been significant investment in upgrading the extensive outdoor play area. Although the majority of the children are in their pre-school year, almost 40% of the children are under-age. A feature of the school is the attention given to the provision of an environment and activities which are suitable for both the full age children and those younger children who will attend for two years.

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

**CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children demonstrate very good levels of independence as they freely access and use equipment, manage their own personal care and engage in the daily routines. There is a high level of co-operative and imaginative play among a majority of the children. Almost all of the children are very well motivated and clearly enjoy their learning; they often show high levels of concentration and perseverance. The children almost all display good social skills and behaviour.

4. The children use a wide range of creative materials to experiment and explore colour, texture and pattern; a majority are beginning to make simple representations in their drawings and paintings. A majority of children also demonstrate an increasing interest in and understanding of simple mathematical concepts and language. The children enjoy discovering the world around them as they plant and observe changes such as melting ice.

5. The majority of children have a high level of interest in participating in mark-making and emergent writing. They also show a very good level of interest in browsing books independently and in listening attentively to stories and rhymes during small group sessions. Most children are confident to engage in conversation with adults and other children. Almost half of the children are identified as having speech immaturities or delays. The high ratio of adults to children and their effective deployment, contributes to the good level of support being provided, in relation to the development of the children's language, social and emotional skills, particularly among the younger age group.

**THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

6. The staff have worked hard to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment, which promotes autonomous learning, both indoors and outdoors; all of the space within the nursery is used effectively.

7. The staff are all supportive and caring in their work with the children. They have a good shared understanding of the learning to be promoted and frequently make effective use of opportunities to extend the children's thinking and language as they engage with them during activities and daily routines. In the very best practice the staff build creatively on the children's own ideas and skilfully combine and extend all aspects of the curriculum into the different areas of play.

8. The staff all contribute to the planning and evaluation of a broad and balanced pre-school programme, which provides good to excellent opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Individual education plans have appropriate targets and are implemented following close liaison with parents and relevant agencies. The school has developed appropriate systems for recording the children's progress and is very effectively promoting parents' contributions to this process through initial home visits, and by engaging them in the development of individual child profiles. The staff are making good progress in developing their skills in recording and linking the assessment information to their planning to ensure it meets the individual needs and interests of each of the children. In the light of the high number of children identified with language and communication delays, the Principal recognises the need to develop further the records of the children's language development and to use this information in conjunction with recent training to provide appropriate intervention and targeted support.

9. The Principal places a strong emphasis on including parents in their child's learning and development and in the life of the school. The commitment of the staff, the work being developed by the parent co-ordinator, the strong links with other schools and agencies, and the range of interesting and creative approaches to learning are each contributing to the children's progress.

10. The quality of pastoral care within this school is outstanding. The Principal provides effective leadership in ensuring an inclusive and supportive ethos, which values the contributions of all children, staff, parents and governors.

11. The nursery school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

12. The nursery school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, and has appropriate policies and programmes in place which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

13. The hard-working and dedicated Principal sets a very positive and enthusiastic tone within the school; she provides excellent leadership and management for all aspects of school life. The Principal has a clear vision for the development of high quality early years provision in the interests of the children and families within the community. She promotes continuing professional development for all of the staff; their contribution and ideas are clearly valued. Effective self-evaluation and reflective practice are evidenced by the significant improvements brought about in recent years, the relevant school development planning process and a clear understanding of the priorities for continued improvement.

**14. The key strengths in this nursery school include:**

- the excellent ethos;
- the very high quality of the learning environment both indoors and outdoors;
- the high levels of skills and expertise demonstrated by the staff;
- the children's positive attitudes and dispositions for learning and the good progress they make;

- the very good links being developed with others including, parents, agencies and the local community; and
- the excellent leadership and management provided by the Principal.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is very good. The nursery school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and 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 staff and the management committee to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Almost 30% of the parents responded to the questionnaire. The responses from all of the questionnaires indicated a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. In particular, the responses highlighted an appreciation of the caring and helpful staff, the leadership provided by the Principal, the range and high standard of activities and the opportunities for parents to be involved. A summary of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the nursery school.

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