

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St John the Baptist Nursery
School, Portadown

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST JOHN THE BAPTIST NURSERY SCHOOL,
PORTADOWN, CO ARMAGH (513-6217)**

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*	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	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	3
With English as an additional language	6	3

* 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.	2%
Average attendance for the previous year.	96%

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)	3	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	55.8%
Number of written comments	10

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST NURSERY SCHOOL, PORTADOWN, CO ARMAGH, BT62 1EB
(513-6217)**

INSPECTED; 9 JUNE 2011

1. St John the Baptist Nursery School is located on the outskirts of Portadown. The vast majority of the children come from the immediate area. The nursery school provides two full time sessions daily with 52 children attending.

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

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The staff place great emphasis on the development of the children's personal capabilities and as a result they display high levels of independence, are very sociable and have a positive attitude to their learning. They are eager to explore the very attractive indoor and outdoor learning environments and engage in lengthy periods of co-operative and productive play. The children produce high standards of work which include detailed and complex representational paintings and models of the world around them. They access resources freely, handle tools and equipment competently, make independent choices and can talk confidently about their work and experiences.

4. There are excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; the development of the children's language and physical development are particular strengths of the provision. The language-rich environment extends the children's language and learning and fosters their interest in early reading and writing. Captions and text are incorporated into wall displays and themed books enhance all areas of play. There are daily group story sessions which the children clearly enjoy and regular opportunities for music making. The staff use appropriate mathematical language when participating in the children's play and promote the children's understanding of size, shape, weight, capacity and positional language.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. During the inspection the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children was consistently good and, on occasions, outstanding. The staff engages purposefully with the children, they listen to them and often build effectively on their interests and ideas. In the best examples observed the staff carefully exploited the learning potential within the activities and skilfully extended the children's thinking and imagination. The thoughtful organisation of the daily timetable provides a good balance between lengthy periods of free play and activities organised by the staff. Transitions between the different routines and activities are managed very effectively; as a consequence, each session flows smoothly and all of the time is used very well for learning.

6. The quality of all the written planning is of a very high standard and is sufficiently detailed to guide the staff in their work while remaining flexible to allow them to take account of the children's interests and needs as they arise. The children's learning and progress is carefully monitored, recorded and assessed using a combination of methods. The information gathered is used to inform future planning and is also shared with the parents.

7. The nursery school provides excellent support for those children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The children's needs are identified early and documented appropriately. Individual educational plans have been drawn up which include appropriate targets and teaching strategies. Effective links have been established with other support agencies and health professionals.

8. Excellent links have been established with the parents and, from the outset, they are encouraged to become involved in the education of their child and the life of the nursery school. A variety of methods are used to communicate with them which include regular newsletters, a parents' noticeboard, questionnaires and a lending library. A range of parent information meetings and classes are provided throughout the year and the Principal reports that these are well attended.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery school is outstanding. Among the strengths are the very positive working relationships at all levels and the priority given to the children's well-being; the children appear happy and confident and their behaviour is generally very good.

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

11. The nursery school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of a healthy snack and 'all weather' opportunities to play outdoors, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The Principal provides outstanding leadership and manages the nursery school very effectively. She promotes a strong sense of team-spirit among the dedicated staff who share her commitment to ongoing development and improvement.

13. The staff are reflective in their work and the process of self-evaluation is well embedded in the nursery school; there is clear evidence that it has led to continuous improvements in the quality of the provision over recent years. A comprehensive development plan incorporating the extended school provision identifies appropriate priorities for development over the current three year period.

14. The key strengths of the nursery school include:

- the caring, friendly ethos and the excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the high standards of work achieved by the children and their positive attitude to learning;
- the consistently high quality of the interaction between the adults and the children;
- the excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the comprehensive methods of planning and assessment; and
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal and the dedicated staff who work together in the best interest of the children.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery school 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 Board of Governors (governors) to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty-nine of the parents responded to the questionnaire and ten made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire were wholly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the nursery school's work. The responses from the governors and the staff questionnaires were also very positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and governors of the nursery school.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

