

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Strathfoyle Nursery School,  
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection  
in April 2011

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON STRATHFOYLE NURSERY SCHOOL,  
LONDONDERRY (211-6232)**

**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 | 1              | 0              |
| At CoP stages 3 or 4**                      | 5              | 0              |
| At CoP stages 1 or 2**                      | 3              | 0              |
| With English as an additional language      | 3              | 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. | 14  |
| 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         | -                    | -                    |

**3. Details of Staff**

| <b>Number of:</b>                | <b>Full-Time</b> | <b>Part-Time</b>  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Teachers                         | 3                | 0                 |
| Qualified Nursery Assistants     | 1                | 1 (Special Needs) |
| Nursery Assistants (unqualified) | 1                | 0                 |

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

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

**4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)**

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Number issued              | 52    |
| Percentage returned        | 59.6% |
| Number of written comments | 15    |

**STRATHFOYLE NURSERY SCHOOL, STRATHFOYLE, LONDONDERRY, BT47 6UP  
(211-6232)**

**INSPECTED: 13 APRIL 2011**

1. Strathfoyle Nursery School is situated in the village of Strathfoyle. The children come from a wide catchment area. The staff operate an open-plan system which allows the children from the two classes to play freely together for most of the day. A new assistant teacher has been appointed since the last inspection in 2004. The Principal is making a phased return to the classroom following a long period of sick leave. She has fully resumed her principal duties.

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 children display a positive attitude to learning and demonstrate very good progress in their overall development. The children are confident, highly motivated and keen to talk about their learning. They are friendly and mannerly and very familiar with the layout of the nursery and the necessary routines. The children often engage in lengthy periods of concentrated, productive and co-operative play and are eager to explore and make full use of the highly stimulating learning environment. The children explore the play opportunities independently and in groups, making choices about the activities, resources and when they wish to avail of snack time.

4. The majority of the children demonstrate a keen interest in books; they refer to them frequently during play and enjoy opportunities for storytelling in both large and small groups. During the inspection a few children were observed reading books to other children. The children choose books for information and enjoyment and make good use of pictorial instructions as models for their own constructions. Many of the children engage in early mark-making and writing and a small number are beginning to show an interest in letters and print.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. All the areas of the nursery school are available for the children to use through the very successful, planned management of the open-plan classrooms, the hall area and the outdoors areas. This arrangement is used effectively to support the children's independence and provides good space for the very wide range of activities offered.

6. There are excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and, in particular, the development of the World Around Us curriculum area is a key strength of the nursery's provision. The daily routine offers a very good balance between activities freely chosen by the children and adult-led sessions.

7. The interactions between the staff and children are consistently of a high quality; the staff use every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. The staff promote enjoyment and learning through meaningful participation in the play activities. They use open ended questions and help the children make connections in their learning and the children are encouraged to investigate and to problem solve.

8. The nursery school places an appropriate emphasis on the development of the children's language and communication skills; all of the staff have received training in both the EKLAN and HANEN programmes. The staff provide an interesting range of resources and activities to introduce new language and to stimulate the children's thinking and help them engage in imaginative play.

9. The staff have developed very detailed individual education plans (IEPs) for those children experiencing speech and language difficulties and those experiencing other difficulties with accessing learning. These plans are shared and reviewed regularly with the parents. The children identified as having special educational needs are well-integrated with their peers. The IEP reviews and monitoring outcomes indicate that all of the children are making progress.

10. The staff work collaboratively to plan and review the programme on offer within the large shared, indoor and outdoor spaces on a regular basis. There is rigorous planning in place to ensure progression in the children's learning and to guide the adults in their work with the children. The staff's evaluations are realistic and focus appropriately on the children's learning. The staff have a very good system in place for observing the children's learning; these observations form the basis of detailed assessments of each child and effectively inform future planning.

11. Comprehensive booklets, regular newsletters and a parents' noticeboard have been designed to provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the nursery school and highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. Parents are also provided with support by the staff through the provision of school-based courses and information meetings.

12. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery school is outstanding. Among the strengths are the welcoming, friendly and inclusive ethos, 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 exemplary.

13. The nursery has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

14. The nursery gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. This includes, for example, the clear emphasis on health promotion through the curriculum and the healthy snack routines. The children are also provided with daily opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical play outdoors.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

15. The long-serving principal provides outstanding leadership and management in all aspects of the nursery's provision. She is highly committed to providing high quality pre-school provision for all the children in her care and is an excellent role-model for the rest of the staff. The Principal has, over a long period of time, provided appropriate staff development; as a result, the hard-working and dedicated teachers, assistants and support staff have a shared understanding of the aims and work of the nursery school and all contribute to the high standards achieved by the children.

16. The Principal has developed well established processes for self-evaluation. These processes are realistic, purposeful and used appropriately to inform the nursery school development plan and associated action plans.

**17. The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:**

- the highly motivated, independent confident and well behaved children;
- the welcoming, inclusive ethos which supports all the children in their learning;
- the excellent opportunities for learning, indoors and outdoors, in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and, in particular, the provision for learning about the World Around Us;
- the consistently high quality staff interactions with the children which effectively promotes the development of language and communication skills;
- the rigorous and detailed planning which builds effectively on the staff's observations of the children's learning; and
- the excellent leadership of the Principal and her emphasis on continual improvement within the nursery school.

18. 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 parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the inspection questionnaires. Of the 52 questionnaires issued, 31 were returned to the Inspection Services Branch; 15 also contained written comments. All of the responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision in the nursery. In particular, they expressed appreciation of the caring and dedicated staff, the happy learning environment and the wide range of learning experiences provided for the children. The responses from the staff and governors were also wholly positive. A summary of the responses has been shared with the staff and governors.

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