

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Arellian Nursery School, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
February 2014

Quantitative terms

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% |

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

| |
|----------------|
| DESCRIPTOR |
| Outstanding |
| Very Good |
| Good |
| Satisfactory |
| Inadequate |
| Unsatisfactory |

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observed teaching and learning through play, the children's achievements and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with staff holding specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management;
- a meeting with a small group of parents;
- a meeting with the parents learning worker; and
- the opportunity for the parents, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The parental responses indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the nursery school. In particular, the parents appreciate the progress evident in their children's learning and development, the opportunities provided to be involved in the work of the school and their child's learning, and the very good support for children with additional needs.

| Questionnaire | Number issued | Number returned | Percentage returned | Number with comments |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Parents | 52 | 15 ¹ | 28% | * |
| Staff | 8 | 7 | 87% | * |

* fewer than 5

2. Context

Arellian Nursery School is located on a spacious site off Bentham Drive, Belfast. Almost all of the children attending the two full-time nursery classes are in their immediate pre-school year and come from the local area. Almost 40% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with their learning and development. Since the last inspection, a new assistant teacher was appointed and took up post in 2007, a parent learning support worker, funded by the Big Lottery, took up post in 2009 and the building was extended to incorporate a new parents room in 2013. In addition, the school has extended its opening hours through extended schools funding to provide a breakfast club, afterschool provision and a holiday club for the children.

¹ The ETI is trialling a new range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage of questionnaires returned may be low.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall finding

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall Performance Level | Very good |
| Achievements and Standards | Very good |
| Provision | Very good |
| Leadership and Management | Outstanding |

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are respectful to the staff and each other and are making very good progress in developing their personal and social skills; on the day of the inspection their behaviour was excellent. The children make independent choices and decisions and are confident and co-operative with the daily routines. They remain for sustained periods and play productively at a wide range of activities throughout the playrooms. A small number of children still require adult support with their attention and listening skills during larger group sessions; the timing and length of these session needs to be kept under review to meet more effectively the needs of all of the children.
- The children's creative work is well developed and many of the children play collaboratively and with imagination as they take on different roles in the hospital and hairdresser play areas.
- While many of the children are identified with speech, language and communication difficulties on entry to the nursery most are making very good progress in developing these skills. They talk with increasing confidence to each other and the staff during play and in smaller group activities. The children enjoy information and story books, songs and rhymes both through the session and during group sessions.
- The children are mainly at an early stage of development in their use of mathematical language; they are making good progress in understanding concepts as they sort, match, count, make comparisons of size and understand the sequence of the day, with effective adult modelling and support.

- The children show an interest in and increasing awareness of their environment through the appropriately themed topics and the wide range of visitors to the nursery. A small number of the children would benefit from additional space and access to more space and basic resourcing as appropriate to their stage of development.
- The children enjoy and benefit from the regular opportunities to play outdoors and most can run, climb, balance and pedal with confidence. They are developing well their use of smaller tools such as brushes, and pencils and smaller construction materials.

6. Provision

- The learning environment is well resourced and laid out to support effectively the children's autonomy and interest. The children's art work and captions of their thoughts and ideas about the nursery are well displayed to celebrate their achievements and keep parents informed and involved.
- The skilful interactions of the whole staff team is a key strength within the nursery provision. They have a clear understanding of the pre-school curriculum and interact effectively to consistently promote settled play and good behaviour and to extend the children's language, thinking and learning. The children benefit from the additional staff employed to increase the adult to child ratios.
- The pre-school programme is well planned to provide a broad and balanced range of interesting experiences for the children in the playrooms and for physical energetic play outdoors. The staff have appropriately prioritised the need to plan for a wider range of learning experiences outdoors across all areas of the curriculum.
- The excellent pastoral care is exemplified in the inclusive, caring ethos, the child centred approach and the very good working relationships among the staff, the children, the parents and governors.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management have a very clear vision for providing quality pre-school education and pastoral care that meets the particular needs of the children and families in the local community. Excellent work is being done to engage parents effectively in their children's development and education, and to develop the parents own skills and learning. The staff are reflective in their approach and constantly review and update their practice and own professional development. While the school recognises that the pace of the school development planning process has at times been impeded through the recent turnover of staff, there is clear evidence of ongoing improvement and development. The leadership and management are well placed to build on their successes and update the school development plan and associated action plans in line with the inspection findings.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

8. Conclusion

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.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ARELLIAN NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

| Number of children: | Class 1 | Class 2 | Class 3 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Attending full-time | 26 | 26 | |
| Attending part-time | | | |
| Under 3 years of age* | 7 | 1 | |
| With statement of special educational needs | 3 | | |
| Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs | | | |
| At CoP stages 3 or 4** | 3 | 4 | |
| At CoP stages 1 or 2** | 10 | 12 | |
| With English as an additional language | | 6 | |

* 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. | 71% |
| Average attendance for the previous year. | 92% |

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 | |
| Nursery Assistants (qualified) | 2 | 1 |
| Nursery Assistants (non-qualified) | | |
| Special Needs Assistant | 1 | |

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students | 0 |
| Trainees | 0 |

*** Total placements since September of current year

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