

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bligh's Lane Nursery School,
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
May 2014

eti

*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

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

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

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	52	39	75%	35
Staff	11	9	82%	6

* fewer than 5

The responses from the parents and the staff were wholly positive. The parents praised highly the approachable and kind staff, the emphasis placed on developing the children's social skills, the effective levels of communication and the range of stimulating activities provided for the children. The staff value the child-centred approach, the caring and nurturing environment and the training opportunities provided to improve the children's experiences.

2. Context

The nursery school is situated in its own grounds in the Creggan area of Londonderry. The children come from the surrounding area which has been identified as having a high level of social deprivation. The majority of the children are entitled to free school meals.

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	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children settle very quickly to the planned activities and engage in purposeful, concentrated and co-operative play. They demonstrate high levels of independence and perseverance, and enjoy taking on roles of responsibility. The children's behaviour is exemplary; they show kindness to their peers and are respectful of the staff and visitors.
- All of the children are making very good progress in relation to their age and stage of development, including those children who require additional support with their learning. They demonstrate a natural inquisitiveness and are confident in asking questions. The children use early mark-making and letter formation to label their creative work and are able to transfer these skills to a range of other play activities, for example, making lists in the cafe and writing birthday cards to family members. They show a keen interest in books which are available throughout the playroom.
- A range of planned activities provide appropriate opportunities for the children to use and develop their early mathematical skills and vocabulary and they are able to talk about the key concepts of counting, sequencing, measure, time, estimation and comparison. The children respond well to tasks which involve problem solving and are able to explain their reasoning in relation to the decisions they have made.
- The children have a keen interest in the world around us and draw from previous and personal learning experiences to extend their understanding during discussions with the staff and their peers. They demonstrate an appreciation of the natural environment and care for living things.
- The children's representational drawings are very detailed and they produce imaginative junk art often accessing independently a range of creative resources to personalise their work. The children initiate spontaneous singing sessions and are developing a sense of rhythm using the musical instruments which are provided during indoor and outdoor play.

6. Provision

- The staff have used the available space in the playrooms and shared areas creatively to provide an environment which is characterised by enjoyment and investigation. The use of a wide range of natural materials provides real life contexts for the children's play. The timetable is well organised and daily routines are well established and used to develop the children's independence. The arrangements for snack and lunchtime provide very good opportunities to develop the children's conversational and social skills.
- The staff interactions are of an outstanding quality. They know the children very well and are intuitive to their needs and interests. Open ended questioning is used very effectively by the staff to stimulate meaningful discussions and create opportunities for enquiry and exploration. The staff are skilled at exploiting opportunities for investigation and sensitively encourage the children to experiment and to explain their thinking.
- The children are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum which includes relevant topic based activities. A particular focus has been the engagement of boys in the learning process and the staff have provided imaginative activities which encourage the boys to become involved in sustained play. The recently refurbished and stimulating outdoor area provides opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, including a planned programme of seasonal planting and harvesting.
- The work of the staff is guided well by the effective long and medium term planning which is well informed by perceptive observations to meet the individual needs of the children. This extends to those children requiring additional support with their learning or those who need further challenge. The children have appropriate opportunities to contribute to the planning process and staff are skilled at responding to spontaneous play. The evaluations of planning are comprehensive and contribute to on-going improvement in provision.
- The provision for children who require additional support with their learning is very effective. The children are identified early and targeted support is provided by experienced and well trained staff.
- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. The staff have created an inclusive and welcoming environment for the children and their families. The child-centred approach ensures that the educational, social and emotional well-being of the children is nurtured on a daily basis.
- The nursery school gives outstanding attention to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle through the healthy snack and lunchtime arrangements and the high quality opportunities for the development of physical skills during indoor and outdoor play sessions. The extended schools' programme provides a healthy breakfast and a range of additional physical activities including horse riding, yoga and gymnastics.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal provides outstanding leadership and is very well supported by the highly skilled assistant teacher and support staff. There is a strong sense of team work and collegiality; all of the staff share the vision of providing high quality experiences for the children. The emphasis placed on continuing professional development has had a positive influence on the learning experiences for the children and is focused appropriately on raising achievement, developing a positive attitude to learning and removing barriers to learning.
- The well-established culture of self-evaluation and self-reflection informs the rigorous and well embedded process of development planning. There are appropriate and regular opportunities for the school community to contribute to the development planning process.
- The school has effective links with parents, the local community and external agencies including the local Sure Start, primary and post-primary schools and colleges.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the nursery has comprehensive arrangements in place for the safeguarding of 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 outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON Blich's Lane NURSERY SCHOOL,
LONDONDERRY (211-6266)**

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	1	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	9	10
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	9	10
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
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.	65%
Average attendance for the previous year.	91.42%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	0	0

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	6	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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