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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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

of

**Holy Family Nursery School
Belfast**

June 2015

FOLLOW-UP REPORT TO THE INSPECTION OF HOLY FAMILY NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST

The inspection of Holy Family Nursery School in September 2013, evaluated the provision overall as satisfactory. The inspection identified the need for the nursery school to:

- develop further the processes for observing, assessing and recording the children's progress in their learning to inform the planning and best meet their individual needs; and
- improve the processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this playgroup is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two interim follow-up visits on June 2014 and November 2014, and a follow-up inspection on 9 June 2015.

The action plan received by the Department of Education (DE) following the inspection was of a good quality.

In the period since the inspection, the following actions have taken place which affect the work of the nursery.

- A development proposal has been submitted to close the nursery as a stand-alone school and re-open it under the management of Holy Family Primary School in September 2016.
- There have been significant staffing changes. The principal retired and a teacher has been seconded from Holy Family Primary School as acting principal in the interim period. At the time of the follow up inspection, a temporary teacher and a temporary building supervisor were in position.
- The staff have had a range of relevant training and made professional visits to other schools.
- Classroom assistants from Holy Family Primary School have been deployed for short periods in the nursery for several days a week to disseminate best practice.
- The staff have been involved in the Early Years Inclusion Training that has built their capacity to plan more effectively for children who require additional support with their learning.
- The acting principal had no principal release time allocated prior to April 2015 due to budget constraints.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection.

- The consistent implementation, by all of the staff and the volunteers, of the more detailed planning systems is leading to very good or excellent learning opportunities for the children across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children are making very good progress and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- The quality of the staff interactions is of a consistently high quality and promotes the children's learning. The staff listen well to the children and build effectively on their ideas to extend the children's thinking, language and learning.
- There are more effective systems in place for planning and assessing the children's progress in learning, including the introduction of a more detailed language profile.
- The staff's capacity to analyse information pertaining to children requiring additional support with their learning has improved. They review and improve effectively aspects of the learning environment, the routines and the resources to support the children's learning.
- The quality of the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is more stimulating and richly resourced; it is language -rich and enhanced with the addition of natural materials that provide very good opportunities for the children to develop their natural curiosity, explore and investigate. The outdoor area has been improved to ensure a safe learning environment in all areas of play and makes better use of all of the available space for learning.
- Parents are more involved in the life and work of the school through their participation as volunteers, such as, their involvement in a special art project.
- There are more effective processes in place for self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement and implementation of the changes to practice. The school development plan evaluates clearly the provision; the staff use accurately the quality indicators to identify the current strengths, the areas for further development and the actions to be taken. There is clear evidence of significant improvements being made in the children's achievements and standards, the provision for learning and in leadership and management during the follow up inspection processes.
- The acting principal has a clear vision for high quality provision, is reflective in her practice and fosters an effective collaborative team approach to raising standards and effecting improvement in the children's learning experiences.
- The school has moved from a financial deficit to an agreed financial plan for 2015-2018.

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.

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