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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Holy Family Nursery School
Belfast**

May 2008

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION IN HOLY FAMILY NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT15 2HR (113-6230)

The inspection in April 2005 highlighted strengths in the positive ethos, the lengthy period of uninterrupted play which provided good opportunities for the children to make choices and develop their ideas and the instances when the children displayed interest and concentrated play. It also identified the need for improvement in the following key area:

- to develop further all the staff's skill in recognising and exploiting fully the learning inherent in the play activities in order to promote effectively the children's language and learning.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the nursery school has taken place:

- the staff received support from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) Early Years Advisory Officer;
- the staff visited a number of nursery schools to observe and discuss aspects of their provision;
- the staff have introduced an open-plan approach to the learning environment;
- detailed plans for the development of the outdoor play environment are being drawn up;
- new furniture and play resources have been purchased for the children's outdoor play experiences and the layout and use of the playrooms have been adapted; and
- the Principal reports that the work on enclosing the veranda area will commence in July 2008.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a series of inspection visits to the nursery school as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visits in December 2006, February 2007 and May 2008. The nursery school has a detailed development plan which has been developed since the inspection.

The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group.

- The staff have benefited from the visits made to other pre-school settings and the valuable support provided by the BELB Early Years Advisory Officer.
- The additional resources and revised layout of the play areas enhance the quality of the learning environment and range of learning experiences for the children. There are better opportunities for the children to develop their imaginative play and their creative ideas.

- The planning formats have been adapted to include appropriate learning outcomes, the role of the adult and to take more account of progression within the six areas of the curriculum. The staff are planning a more appropriate programme for outdoor physical play. A new system of monitoring and evaluating the practice is being implemented. Individual education plans are drawn up for the children experiencing difficulties in their learning.
- The staff provide a greater variety of opportunities for the children to express their ideas and creativity. They promote text more regularly through labelling and adding written comments to the children's work.
- The staff interact more skilfully with the children during play to promote their language and learning. They are consistently more effective in building on the children's ideas and promoting a wider range of learning and language through the play activities. They evaluate the quality of the children's responses and experiences on a regular basis.
- The Principal, well supported by the staff, has worked hard to bring about significant improvements in the overall quality of the children's experiences.

Since the inspection, the nursery school has evaluated the progress made in the area for improvement identified in the original inspection. The promotion of a self-evaluation culture throughout the follow-up inspection period contributed to the improvement made, and helped the nursery school identify its priorities for future development.

Good progress has been made in the area for improvement identified during the original inspection. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are well met. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the nursery school's response to the findings of the inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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