

Education and Training Inspectorate PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



McArthur Nursery School, Belfast

Controlled Nursery School DE Ref No: 111-0002

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in January 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF MCARTHUR NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT5 4FE (111-0002)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of McArthur Nursery School in November 2019¹ which concluded that the nursery needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The important areas for improvement were:

- to improve the short-term planning in order to guide sufficiently the learning and teaching and improve further the quality of the learning experiences and outcomes for the children; and
- to develop further the recently-established process of self-evaluation in order to bring about further improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

The nursery school action plans were of a good quality. The development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in May 2019 and a follow-up inspection in January 2020.

In the interval since the initial inspection the nursery has received external support provided by the Education Authority, in relation to: self-evaluation, planning and observation. Consequently, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the nursery school include the opportunity for the staff to visit other preschool settings to observe good practice in planning and self-evaluation.

Key findings

The outcomes for learners remain good. The children are confident to self-select resources to extend and initiate their own play. They explore their environment with enthusiasm using their senses to describe, explore, and make predictions using natural materials such as vegetables, ice, herbs and other natural materials both indoors and outdoors. The children are well-settled and play purposefully in both classes; they display high levels of perseverance during concentrated collaborative play. Nearly all of the children are confident in engaging with adults to support or extend their learning. A small number of children are still in the process of developing their social and communication skills with sensitive adult support.

The quality of provision is now good. The cycle of planning, observations and assessment is now more systematic. The staff make regular, appropriate observations and assessments of the children's learning and use these to inform short-term planning. This has resulted in the development of a more child-led approach that builds on the needs and interests of the children. The staff use more open ended questioning to promote the children's thinking and celebrate the voice of the children through interactive displays. This has impacted positively on higher levels of concentrated play by the children.

¹ https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/preschool-inspection-mcarthur-nursery-school-belfast-111-0002_0.pdf

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The support of the Education Authority School Improvement Professional, combined with links with other nurseries and training has built the staff capacity to bring about improvement. There are appropriate procedures and structures in place to improve the learning environment and strategic management of the nursery school. The staff team work well collegially and they regularly reflect on their practice. The School Development Plan and associated action plans are informed through consultation with all of the key stakeholders; the processes for monitoring and evaluating are leading to improvement in the outcomes for learners and the quality of the provision. There are procedures in place for informing the governors on the progress of the actions leading to improvement and they are more closely involved in the self-evaluation process.

Overall effectiveness

McArthur Nursery School demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school sustains improvement in developing and embedding further the improvements made to promote high quality pre-school experiences and outcomes.

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