

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballysally Nursery School,
Coleraine

Report of an Inspection
in May 2010

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYSALLY NURSERY SCHOOL

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	2	2
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	7	7
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	2	0
With English as an additional language	1	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.	50%
Average attendance for the previous year.	87%

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	0
Nursery Assistants	2	3
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	36.5%
Number of written comments	7

**BALLYSALLY NURSERY SCHOOL, COLERAINE, CO LONDONDERRY, BT52 2QA
(311-6263)**

INSPECTED: 20 MAY 2010

1. Ballysally Nursery School is situated in the Ballysally estate in the outskirts of Coleraine. Since the last inspection a new Principal and two new nursery assistants have been appointed. The children come from the surrounding area; at the time of the inspection ten children were in their penultimate pre-school year.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery school is good. The nursery school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the nursery school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the nursery school's progress on the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. Most of the children demonstrate good levels of independence in their personal care, and are familiar with the daily routines. A majority of the children were observed purposefully engaged in extended periods of sustained and concentrated play across a wide variety of activities both indoors and outdoors; these children were observed playing co-operatively and with purposeful engagement in dough, role-play, construction and creative play. The children can talk about aspects of the planned topics and themes, show interest in books, can recognise their own symbol and are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language. The children are keen to draw from observation, with developing attention to detail and realistic representation. A significant minority of the children continue to show low levels of engagement in their play they have limited attention spans and often require constant adult support with sharing, resolving conflicts and taking turns.

4. The staff regularly engage the children in purposeful discussion and develop natural conversations around the children's play and home experiences. While a majority of the children speak with developing fluency and clarity, others are developing their confidence to use simple phrases and sentences. This reflects the wide range of abilities and needs within the nursery. The children have opportunities to handle and explore a wide range of books and enjoy stories both independently and in group situations; the staff report that this has been one of the successful outcomes from the introduction of 'Story Sacs' for the children. Very good links have been established with the local SureStart staff and speech therapists to reinforce individual and group support for these children within the nursery programme.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. There are good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff have given much thought and attention to creating a rich inviting and stimulating learning environment for the children following the recent school refurbishment; they now make better use of the available space both indoors and outdoors. Greater attention has also been given to promoting displays of the children's work, and in creating more inviting interest areas and imaginative play spaces which focus on the children's developing work and interest.

6. During the inspection, the staff promoted rich language and learning during the course of the children's play around the topic of the 'Three Little Pigs' which was extended by skilful and effective use of open-ended questions and problem-solving experiences. It is important that this good practice is disseminated consistently across all the topics.

7. The staff are developing a more consistent team approach to planning a comprehensive and balanced programme for the children and in recording and assessing the children's responses and progress. It will be important that sound systems are introduced to ensure that the programme is regularly evaluated, that the children's interests, needs and ideas are clearly reflected in the topics and that there is clear evidence that all of the children's progress is systematically recorded.

8. The provision for pastoral care within the nursery school is very good. Among the strengths are the very good care and support provided by the staff and the instances of the very good behaviour exhibited by most of the children.

9. The nursery has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

10. The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, the children have healthy daily snacks, have regular access to outdoor play and are provided with good opportunities to promote their physical development. There are missed opportunities for developing independence in the children not being involved in the setting of their own tables each day.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The Principal was appointed in December 2009. There is evidence of significant improvement in key aspects of the provision since her appointment, and she demonstrates a commitment to continual professional development and improvement for herself and her staff. She has appropriately identified for the next three years, priorities which need to include a clear focus on sound systems of monitoring and evaluating improvement, and disseminating the good practice throughout the school.

12. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the Board of Governors (governors) and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A significant minority (37%) of the parents responded to the questionnaire and seven made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that almost all the parents regard the nursery highly and appreciate:

- the staff are concerned for the development and well-being of the children, and
- the children are learning through a range of interesting activities.

All of the responses from the governors and the staff were wholly positive and indicated an appreciation for their increased involvement in the planning and delivery of the day-to-day experiences for the children, and the developing shared approach to ensure consistency of experiences for the children. A summary of the responses have been shared with the staff and governors of the nursery school.

13. The key strengths in this nursery school include:

- the happy, caring ethos based on good relationships between the staff, the children and the parents;
- the good opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;

- the instances of good concentrated play observed;
- the occasions where the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children was of a high standard;
- the hard-working and dedicated staff who are developing a collaborative approach to promoting improvement; and
- the effective leadership and management of the Principal and the work done to date to identify and address key priorities.

14. The priorities identified for improvement are:

- the further development of the planning to ensure a sharper focus on the learning to be promoted; and
- a rigorous approach to evaluating the provision.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery school is good. The nursery school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the nursery school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the nursery school's progress on the areas for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Some of the outdoor play equipment is unsafe for the children to use.
- Review the use of all potential space within the shared play area.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2010

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

