

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Oldpark Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2013

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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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON OLDPARK NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	27	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	5	6
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	5	9
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.	64%
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	1	2
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	3	2
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	53
Percentage returned	54%
Number of written comments	17

1. Introduction

Oldpark Nursery School is located within a residential area off the Cliftonville Road. Since the last inspection, a new Principal and an additional teacher, employed on a job share basis, have been appointed. The school operates two full time nursery classes and an optional extended school day through the provision of a breakfast club and after school provision. The children, who are all in their immediate pre-school year come from a wide catchment area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations, discussions with the staff and from a range of documentation provided by the pre-school setting.

The views of the parents and staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The questionnaires returned from parents, staff and management were almost all highly positive about all aspects of the work of the staff and the provision being provided. The written comments indicated their appreciation of the good information provided for parents, the wide range of experiences provided for the children and the professional and well organised staff. The small number of concerns raised have been shared with the Principal and the governors.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

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.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Very Good Very Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- The children are well motivated and engaged in their learning. They make independent choices and decisions and co-operate well with the daily routines. They play collaboratively, take turns and cooperate with each other during their play. Most of the children can concentrate and persevere with tasks for a prolonged period and take a pride in their achievements.

- The children, including most of those identified with speech and language difficulties, are making good progress in developing their oral language. They talk confidently to the staff and each other during their play and most listen very attentively during group songs and story sessions. The children enjoy browsing books throughout the playrooms, can recognise their own names and show an interest in print. A small number of children are beginning to write their names.
- Many of the children show an interest in and understanding of early mathematical concepts such as shape, number, time and position. They often show a keen interest in their environment and in investigating the properties of materials. During the inspection, a majority of children often required adult support to make productive use of the role play areas on offer.
- The children are enthusiastic in making detailed representational drawings, painting and models both individually and in small groups. They make independent use of the materials in the creative areas to express their own ideas. The children would benefit from having daily access to large construction and open ended materials to develop further their skills, imagination and creative ideas.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The playrooms are attractively set out with a range of activities to promote the children's interest and encourage independent choices and decision making. The attractive displays of the children's own work, captions of what they have said and the incorporation of natural and authentic items enhance the learning environment further.
- The staff are all sensitive and supportive in their interactions with the children; they are skilful in promoting the children's interest, language and learning as they engage with them during play and during enjoyable group sessions. The staff should review how they can create more opportunities to work with smaller groups of children who still require support with their speech and language.
- The staff plan an interesting programme which provides very good or better opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff are developing useful systems to record the children's progress and share this information with the parents. The children identified as having additional needs have well focused individual education plans which are evaluated regularly. The staff should continue to strengthen the link between their assessments and the written planning to ensure that the provision consistently matches all of the children's interests and stages of development.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The nursery has a friendly, inclusive and nurturing ethos. The children cooperate well with the nursery rules and routines and their behaviour is very good.
- The nursery school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example regular energetic play and dental care, which encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The principal manages the nursery effectively; she promotes a culture of consultation, reflection and continuous improvement among the hard working staff team. The school development plan identifies a range of appropriate priorities for further action.
- There are very effective links with the parents, local feeder primary schools and other agencies. The staff have benefited from the training, advice and guidance from the Early Years Inclusion Team.
- The accommodation and resources have been updated and improved. The staff are appropriately continuing to broaden the learning opportunities through the outdoor environment and in their use of an open plan approach in the playrooms.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery schools arrangements for safeguarding children are comprehensive; they reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

7. 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 self improvement.

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