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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**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

**St Michael's Nursery School
Belfast**

Inspected: February 2009

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST MICHAEL'S NURSERY SCHOOL,
BELFAST (113-6315)**

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 a statement of special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs | 1 | 0 |
| At CoP stages 3 or 4** | 1 | 0 |
| At CoP stages 1 or 2** | 1 | 0 |
| 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. | 21% |
| Average attendance for the previous year. | 89% |

2. Duration of Sessions

| Full-time | Part-time: am | Part-time: pm |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 4¾ hours | - | - |

3. Details of Staff

| Number of: | Full-Time | Part-Time |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Teachers | 2 | 0 |
| Nursery Assistants | 2 | 1 |
| Qualified Nursery Assistants | 2 | 1 |

| Number of: *** | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Students | 3 |
| Trainees | 0 |

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Number issued | 49 |
| Percentage returned | 67.3% |
| Number of written comments | 14 |

ST MICHAEL'S NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT11 9JP (113-6315)

DATE OF INSPECTION: 19 FEBRUARY 2009

1. The nursery school is situated on the Stewartstown Road in west Belfast. Since the last inspection, the nursery has introduced an extended day through the provision of an early morning club which is funded through the Extended Schools programme of the Department of Education.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the Board of Governors to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A majority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 14 made additional written comments. Those who responded indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the overall provision and they appreciate the information provided through the regular newsletters, the care and commitment of the staff, and the progress their children have made during the school year. The responses from the management and the staff were very positive about the work of the nursery. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the nursery school.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is very good. Among the strengths are the happy and well-settled children whose behaviour is very good.

4. The nursery has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

5. The nursery gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. A healthy break is provided, there are good opportunities for energetic play and the children are encouraged to explore healthy options through the curriculum programme.

6. **The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.**

- The many examples of effective interaction when the staff promoted language and learning through the informal play activities and enjoyable group sessions.
- The broad, balanced and varied planned programme of activities which provides very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The many good examples of the children's concentrated and productive play, in particular, the high level of interest in books, early mark-making and representational art work and the children's frequent use of mathematical language.
- The good links with other professionals, including the effective collaborative work carried out with other nursery schools and speech and language therapists to support the children's early language and communication skills.
- The hard-working staff and the range of methods used to inform and involve the parents.

7. There is evidence of a commitment to continuous reflection and improvement. The staff all contribute to evaluating the work of the nursery and are encouraged to be reflective in their own practice. The school development plan is currently being reviewed and amended. Appropriate priorities have been set including the need to embed the recent work on the development of the children's language skills, and systems to monitor their levels of involvement in play. The Principal and staff have also identified the "world around us" as a curriculum focus to promote investigative, exploratory and imaginative play.

8. 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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