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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 Oliver Plunkett Nursery School
Belfast**

Inspected: November 2006

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST OLIVER PLUNKETT NURSERY SCHOOL,
BELFAST (113-6383)**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	25
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	2	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	6	3
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	35%
Average attendance for the previous year.	84%

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	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	2	0

Number of: ****	
Students	3
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	51
Percentage returned	56.9%
Number of written comments	8

REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT11 8AY (113-6383)

1. The nursery school is situated on the Glen Road, Belfast. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. The Principal and the nursery teacher are recently appointed.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and all expressed a high level of satisfaction with the provision.

3. The nursery implements appropriate procedures for child protection, in line with the relevant Department of Education Circulars, to safeguard the welfare of the children. The policy is shared with the parents. The Principal has identified, appropriately, a few important areas for further development, including the need to update the child protection training for the deputy-designated teacher.

4. The nursery demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a wide range of energetic physical activities.

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

- The staff are committed to the children's welfare; they are hard-working and have a caring and enthusiastic approach to their work with the children.
- The communication with the parents is effective; regular newsletters and open days are designed to encourage the parents to play a full role in the education of their children. In addition, information on the curriculum and their children's progress is shared regularly using a variety of means. The Principal reports that the nursery is establishing a useful programme of liaison with a local primary school. Transition records are completed for the primary school to which the children transfer.
- The planning outlines a broad and balanced programme for the children and offers good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff are developing a collaborative approach to their planning and are beginning to take account of the children's individual interests and abilities and to evaluate the programme.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is always very good and, at times, excellent. The children are encouraged to become independent and to make choices for themselves; as a result the play is settled and purposeful.
- The children's behaviour is good. The staff implement effective strategies to encourage the children's co-operation and sense of responsibility for their environment.

- There are particular strengths in the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development. The atmosphere and environment of the nursery provide rich opportunities for the promotion of language. There is strong encouragement for the children to develop an interest in books; they pay close attention during story sessions and explore information books during their play. The staff make good use of the play opportunities to develop the children's conversational skills and use appropriate questions to extend and develop language and learning.
- Excellent use is made of seasonal and environmental topics, which extend the children's knowledge of, and interest in, the world around them; for example, the role-play area has been arranged to have an autumnal theme. The children's early technological ideas are beginning to be developed with a range of constructional and scrap materials. Well-planned play activities provide the children with opportunities to investigate the properties of water and sand.
- The staff provide sensitive and effective support for the children identified as having additional learning needs.

6. The Principal has been in post for under a year; she is caring, hard-working and manages the nursery effectively. She generates a strong sense of team-spirit. The staff have identified appropriate areas for development; they have reflected constructively on their practice to introduce and monitor new approaches. There is good evidence that their efforts have improved the children's learning experiences.

7. The nursery has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents can have confidence in the nursery's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

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