

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Peter's Nursery School,  
Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2013



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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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 ST PETER'S NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST  
(113-6340)**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	5	5
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	***	***
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	5	***
With English as an additional language	***	***

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

\*\*\* Denotes a number less than 5.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	73%
Average attendance for the previous year.	85%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4½ hours	-	-

**3. Details of Staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	4	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	1
Trainees	5

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year.

**4. Parental Questionnaires**

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	63%
Number of written comments	9

## 1. Introduction

St. Peter's Nursery School is situated in west Belfast. The nursery accommodates 52 children on a full-time basis. The nursery operates an open-plan system where the children have free access across both classrooms. Since the last inspection two additional nursery assistants have been appointed.

## 2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the setting.

The views of the parents, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The parent, staff and management committee questionnaire responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the setting. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and members of the Board of Governors.

## 3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Outstanding Outstanding
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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-settled and engage positively and enthusiastically with their learning. All of the children engage well in sustained and purposeful play both indoors and outdoors and most of them have good levels of independence.
- The children are confident in talking with the adults and their peers and the majority of them have good communication skills. They enjoy the group stories, listen attentively and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Most of the children display high levels of interest in early writing and can produce good representational drawings.
- The children show a very good level of interest in early mathematical concepts and were observed making patterns, sorting, comparing and counting during a wide range of activities.
- The children display high levels of interest in the very good range of natural materials in the nursery which included vegetables and plants.

## 5. Provision for learning

### **The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.**

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is excellent. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos in the nursery underpinned by an atmosphere of mutual respect between the adults and the children and among the children themselves. The staff set high expectations for the children's behaviour and their learning, through the consistent use of positive behaviour strategies and the effective use of praise and encouragement. The children respond well to these strategies and are very well-behaved.
- The adult interactions with the children are of a consistently high quality; the adults respond skilfully to the children's sense of enquiry, building on their ideas and exploiting all the planned and incidental opportunities to extend their thinking both indoors and outdoors. The daily routines are used effectively to promote and extend learning and the transitions between activities are managed seamlessly. Books and writing materials are incorporated effectively throughout the nursery. The staff are very skilful in promoting mathematical language and modelling role-play situations in; the home corner, the shop, and the collage work with natural materials. The staff work hard to provide a stimulating learning environment for the children and excellent use is made of all available space; there are very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The written planning is of a high quality and the collaborative approach to planning has ensured that the adults have a shared understanding of the pre-school curriculum. The staff carry out regular and detailed observations and assessments of the children's progress and needs. They make effective use of their observations of the children's learning to plan an appropriate programme for them.
- The nursery is currently part of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Early Years Pilot and receives support from the Belfast Education and Library Board. The staff have availed of training for both the identification of children with SEN and the use of appropriate strategies to support them. During the inspection the staff provided effective support to help the children to overcome their barriers to learning and they have established very good links with outside agencies.
- The nursery gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of a healthy snack and their involvement in a dental hygiene programme. The children take part in growing, harvesting and tasting a variety of vegetables and they have regular opportunities for physical activity during outdoor play, yoga, and gymnastics.

## 6. Leadership and management

### **The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.**

- There is a very strong sense of collaborative working among all of the staff with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. All staff are enthusiastic and committed to providing high quality learning experiences for all of the children. The Principal provides excellent leadership and management within the nursery. She has a clear vision for providing high quality pre-school education, which is tailored to the needs of each child and she is an excellent role-model in her own work with the children.
- The nursery school development plan is of a high standard and there is clear evidence of ongoing self-evaluation and continuous improvement.
- The nursery has established very good links with the parents, the local primary schools to which the children transfer and the local Sure-start. All staff work hard to ensure that the nursery is an integral part of the local community. Excellent use is made of visitors to the nursery to enhance the children's learning experiences and to provide valuable art experiences for both the children and the parents.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Health and safety**

- A risk assessment should be carried out immediately on the security and safety of the perimeter wall which is topped by razor wire along most of its length at a height which may be within reach of some children.
- During the inspection the scramble net on the climbing frame was missing 2 screws. A risk assessment of the continued use of this apparatus needs to be carried out.



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