

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Therese Nursery School,  
Poleglass, Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in April 2010

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST THERESE NURSERY SCHOOL, POLEGLASS, BELFAST

## 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*	9	9
With statement of special educational needs	1	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	7	8
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	4	7
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.	8 %
Average attendance for the previous year.	81.6%

## 2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4 ½ hours	-	-

## 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	2	1
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	3	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	2	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

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

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	65.4%
Number of written comments	12

**ST THERESE NURSERY SCHOOL, POLEGLASS, BELFAST, BT17 0UN (413-6606)**  
**INSPECTED: 21 APRIL 2010**

1. St Therese Nursery School is situated in purpose-built accommodation in Ardcaoin Avenue, Poleglass. The nursery offers 52 full-time places; currently, 18 of the children attending the nursery are in their penultimate pre-school year. Almost all the children come from the surrounding area.

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

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. Almost all of the children are well-settled and engage in sustained and purposeful play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They demonstrate high levels of independence in their decision-making and selection and use of play resources and materials to create their own paintings and drawings and construction of three-dimensional models; they produce work of a very good standard. A small number of children are supported skilfully and sensitively by the staff, to help them to engage more fully in play with their peers.

4. The atmosphere and environment of the nursery provide valuable and extensive opportunities for the promotion of the children's language skills; these skills are developing successfully in accordance with each child's developmental stage. The children's conversational capabilities develop appropriately through the staff's excellent use of the play opportunities and by using appropriate questions to stimulate and extend the children's language and thinking skills. The children identified with speech and language delays receive carefully planned for and relevant support; they are making very good progress. There is strong encouragement for the children to develop an interest in books; the children pay close attention during story sessions and explore information books during their play.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

5. There are outstanding learning opportunities in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum; of significant note are the development of the children's personal, social and emotional well-being, language, physical skills and the outdoor learning opportunities. The children with additional learning needs and special educational needs are identified early; the staff liaise with health and education professionals and draw up detailed education plans containing clear and realistic steps to support each child's development. The parents are kept well informed about the support programme developed by the school and how they may support the child's learning at home. Through a range of courses and workshops, and in particular, the 'Incredible Years Programme'<sup>1</sup>, the parents are encouraged and supported in how to be involved purposefully with their children's learning.

6. A stimulating range of topics facilitates successfully varied learning experiences for the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff's detailed planning takes account of, and is informed by, the children's responses to the activities; the programme is modified subsequently and appropriately, ensuring progression in the children's learning.

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<sup>1</sup> The Incredible Years is a programme which promotes positive parenting by developing strategies that promote the children's social, emotional and academic competence. (Carolyn Webster-Stratton, PH.D.)

7. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is outstanding. The children benefit from the excellent care and sensitive support provided by the staff. The children's behaviour is excellent and they display very good social skills. In addition, through the Extended Schools' Funding, the designated room for parents is co-ordinated effectively and is used to provide a wide range of courses, which supports parental involvement with their children's education. The children's learning experiences are enhanced through visitors to the nursery and trips to places of educational interest, including participation in beneficial cross-community visits to Kings Road Nursery School, Belfast, Glenann Primary School, Cushendall and Glengormley Integrated Primary School.

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

9. The nursery gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children access a range of healthy snacks and drinks. They have daily opportunities to play outdoors, including experiencing a varied and progressive range of energetic physical activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

10. The Principal is an outstanding leader and innovative practitioner; she is very committed to providing the highest quality pre-school education for the children and families of the Poleglass community. All members of staff, the assistant teachers and nursery assistants, are an integral part of the dedicated and highly effective team. The quality of the team's contribution reflects their commitment to continuing professional development, encouraged and facilitated by the Principal and the Board of Governors (governors). The established culture of reflection and review is evident within their practice. It is also exemplified in the comprehensive strategic plan and associated action plans that identify a cycle of continuous improvement which benefits the children's learning experiences. The governors, the Principal and the co-ordinator of the Extended Schools' Cluster, work tirelessly to source a range of additional funding, for example, from the Integrated Development Fund and the Extended Schools' initiative, to meet the special educational needs of the children. All the school initiatives are producing demonstrable educational outcomes.

11. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and governors to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Approximately 65% of the parents responded to the questionnaire and twelve made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires highlighted the parents' appreciation of the high quality of the nursery provision, the outstanding working relationships and communication between the staff, children and parents, and the specialist support for children with additional learning needs.

12. Ten members of staff responded to the staff questionnaires. All of the responses commented positively on the inspirational leadership of the Principal and the quality of support for the professional development of the staff leading to a highly motivated and dedicated team.

13. The governors' responses commended the staff's commitment and child-centred approach to the continuous development of the nursery's provision, the high calibre of the Principal's leadership, and the importance of the strategic management of the range of initiatives to develop the nursery staff's professionalism and to support the parents with their children's learning.

**14. The key strengths in this nursery include:**

- the positive and inclusive ethos based on the outstanding working relationships at all levels and the early identification and outstanding support provided for children with additional learning needs;
- the children's enjoyment of learning, and their creativity and thinking skills which are promoted effectively through the staff's interaction with the children and through the stimulating learning environment;
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal coupled with the highly effective support of the nursery staff;
- the broad and balanced programme which provides outstanding opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the strong support of the governors and parents for the Principal and staff of the nursery which enhances further the central role that the nursery has within the community which it serves; and
- the highly effective use of additional funding to develop a wide range of initiatives which benefit substantively the children's educational progress.

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

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