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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**

**Sunnylands Nursery School  
Carrickfergus**

**Inspected: May 2007**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SUNNYLANDS NURSERY SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS

### 1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	52	52
Under 3 years of age*	2	2
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	1
With English as an additional language	0	2

\* 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.	14.4%
Average attendance for the previous year.	85%

### 2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2½ hours	2½ hours

### 3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants	3	3
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	1

Number of: ****	
Students	13
Trainees	0

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

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

Number issued	103
Percentage returned	28.2%
Number of written comments	10

**SUNNYLANDS NURSERY SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 8JT  
(311-6150) INSPECTED: 16 MAY 2007**

1. The nursery is situated in Sunnylands Avenue, Carrickfergus. Since the last inspection, the nursery has employed additional classroom assistants, the outdoor area has been landscaped and the bathrooms and flooring have been refurbished.

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 any issues raised have been shared with the staff. A number of parents included written comments praising the work of the staff.

3. The nursery has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection that comply with Department of Education Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The nursery demonstrates a commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a range of appropriate physical activities during dry weather. More should be done to provide opportunities for energetic play in the covered area during inclement weather.

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

- There is a warm, caring atmosphere based on good relationships between the staff and the children.
- The staff prepare a bright and attractive learning environment which is enhanced with photographs, interest areas and the children's own art work.
- The daily timetable is organised to provide a good balance between extended periods of free play and appropriate group activities.
- The attractively landscaped outdoor area provides good opportunities for the staff to promote a range of learning outdoors. This area was not observed being used on the day of the inspection.
- There are some good examples of staff interaction when many of the staff build successfully on the children's ideas to promote the children's thinking, language and learning.
- The children have daily access to a range of activities which give satisfactory or good opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection, particular strengths observed were the examples of concentrated and co-operative play in the farm shop, the promotion of early mathematical ideas and language, the high levels of interest and investigation in the sand and water activities, the opportunity to care for living things and the use of the computer. In addition the wide range of visits and visitors to the nursery further enhance the children's learning.

- The staff are aware of the need which some children have for additional support. They liaise with parents and other professionals. The children appear happy and well integrated into the life of the nursery.
- The nursery is making useful progress in developing stronger curricular links with some local primary schools.
- The staff value the opportunities for training and development provided by the North Eastern Education and Library Board's Early Years Curriculum Support Staff.
- The staff are all hard-working and committed to the welfare of the children. The classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the day-to-day work with the children.
- The Principal has given long service to the families of young children within the local community. She is hard-working, well organised and demonstrates a commitment and willingness to bring about further development.

**6. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.**

- The staff need to develop a more collaborative and systematic approach to recording individual children's progress. They should use this information more effectively to match the programme to the needs of the children and to report to parents.
- The staff need to continue to develop and implement the planning to improve aspects of the curriculum, including the use of books, early marking, music and the provision of physical play during more inclement weather.
- The staff need to build on the many examples of effective staff interaction to ensure it is more consistently of a high level.

7. The Principal has made a useful start in developing a systematic approach to self-evaluation. There is evidence of improvement in those areas which have been priorities, including outdoor play and links with schools. There is an appropriate school development plan which should now be updated in light of the inspection findings.

8. The nursery has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Hot coffee was carried into the playrooms.
- The exit door from a classroom was blocked by large equipment being stored in the covered area.

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