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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Thrushfield Nursery School
Parkgate, Templepatrick

Inspected: January 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Thrushfield Nursery School
Address:	41 Main Street Parkgate TEMPLEPATRICK Co Antrim BT39 0DG
Management Type:	Private

Date of inspection:	25 January 2007
Date of previous inspection:	27 November 2000

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	45	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	21	-
• funded by Department of Education	20	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	1	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
• percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	97%	-

* Special Educational Needs

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	7	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	7	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
3 hours	-	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	26
Percentage returned:	42.3%
Number of written comments:	2

**THRUSHFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL, PARKGATE, TEMPLEPATRICK,
CO ANTRIM BT39 0DG (3CA-0265)**

1. Thrushfield Nursery School is a privately-managed pre-school education centre. The centre is accommodated in a converted farmhouse within a rural location. Since the last inspection, a new member of staff has been appointed, areas of the centre have been refurbished and an outdoor garden area developed and resourced.

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

3. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively and consistently to safeguard the children. Some of the staff need to be more fully aware of the procedures for managing children's behaviour.

4. The pre-school gives consideration to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. There are regular opportunities for the children to participate in a range of physical activities.

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

- There is a warm, family atmosphere within the centre based on good relationships between the staff and the children. The children are very settled and well behaved.
- The spacious accommodation is thoughtfully arranged into distinct areas for play. The learning environment is bright and attractive.
- The daily timetable is managed smoothly and provides a lengthy period of free play during which the children can explore the full range of activities available indoors.
- The wide range of activities provides satisfactory opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection, the key strengths included the many examples of co-operative and concentrated play, the children's own representational painting, the interest in the water tray activity and the opportunities provided to investigate the natural environment.
- The staff are all caring and supportive and often engage in useful discussions with the children. At times, staff miss opportunities to develop and extend the children's ideas and learning. Many of the children are very articulate and can express their ideas with confidence.
- The staff have developed the written planning to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which incorporates a wide range of activities and learning.

- There are good links with the local primary schools.
- There is a strong sense of team-work among the hard-working and long established staff.
- The centre is organised and managed effectively.

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

- Review the latter part of the session to make the most effective use of all the time to promote learning.
- Ensure the quality of the staff's interaction is more consistently effective in developing the children's independence, building on their own ideas and extending their thinking.
- Continue to develop the assessment methods to ensure that the children's progress is monitored more comprehensively and that the information is used to meet the children's differing needs.

7. The staff make useful evaluations of the weekly programme. The manager is reflective in her practice and demonstrates a willingness to improve and develop the provision. The development plan should now be amended to include the issues raised during the inspection.

8. The pre-school centre 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 pre-school centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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