

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Victoria Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 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 VICTORIA NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST (111-6011)

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	26
Attending part-time	0
Under 3 years of age*	10
With statement of special educational needs	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	***
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	***
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.	65.4%
Average attendance for the previous year.	88.9%

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	1	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	1
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ****	
Students	6
Trainees	0

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

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	35%
Number of written comments	8

1. Introduction

Victoria Nursery School is situated in the New Lodge area of north Belfast. The area is the third highest ward of multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland. The nursery is accommodated on the ground floor of a Northern Ireland Housing Executive residential building. At the time of the inspection 26 children were attending on a full-time basis; over one-third of whom are not in their immediate pre-school year. Since the last inspection a new Principal has been appointed and an additional part-time nursery assistant has been employed.

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. Nine of the parents (35%) responded to the questionnaire and 8 made additional written comments. The parent, staff and management committee questionnaire responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the setting. The reporting inspector discussed the key messages reported 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 very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Very Good Very Good
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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 very well-behaved, highly motivated and engage purposefully with their learning; most of them display very good levels of concentration and perseverance.
- A majority of the children can play collaboratively and small groups can adopt roles in the cafe and outdoor areas and sustain them for extended periods of play. The children are confident in following the routines of the nursery and can access the resources they need independently.
- The children enjoy listening to stories in large and small groups; they have good talking and listening skills and enjoy joining in with rhymes and songs and using the wide range of musical instruments available during outdoor play.

- The children show a very good level of interest in early mathematical concepts and a majority are beginning to use early mathematical language naturally during their play including; making patterns, matching, comparing and counting.
- Small groups of children display high levels of interest in the growing of seeds and the butterfly life cycle which are on-going activities within the nursery.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The nursery has a very welcoming, inclusive family ethos and the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The children's behaviour is excellent and there is a strong focus on developing a culture of respect, good manners and sharing. There are very good working relationships at all levels within the nursery and the children's thoughts and ideas are listened to and acted upon when appropriate.
- The staff demonstrate skilful involvement with the children in all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. They build well on the children's ideas to extend their vocabulary and understanding and promote their independence and social skills. The adults introduce mathematical language naturally in all areas of play and use good questioning to encourage the children to think and problem solve.
- There is a broad and balanced programme which provides very good opportunities for learning across most areas of the pre-school curriculum; a particular strength is the excellent planning for outdoor play. The written planning guides the staff well in developing the children's learning and builds effectively on the children's ideas and identified needs. The staff should now ensure that the observations of the children's learning are sufficient to build a profile of each child's development across all the areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The nursery provides very good support for those children identified with additional learning needs. Clearly focused individual learning plans have been developed with appropriate targets and these are evaluated regularly; good links have been established with a range of external agencies to access additional advice and support.
- The nursery gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of a healthy snack, their involvement in a dental hygiene programme, and the wide range of physical activities including a programme of physical development through circus skills. There is a strong focus on the importance of healthy eating and staying safe in the sun and the children are encouraged to recycle scrap fruit for composting.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

The Principal provides very good leadership and management within the nursery and has a clear vision for providing high quality pre-school education tailored to the needs of each child. The Principal is an excellent role model in her own practice and promotes a strong collaborative approach; working closely with staff, parents and other professionals. All of the staff are enthusiastic and committed and have worked very hard to provide a very attractive and stimulating learning environment for the children. The Principal and staff worked very effectively during recent substantial flood damage caused to the nursery, in order to minimise the impact on the children, and ensure that the premises were restored as quickly as possible.

The school development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement and is underpinned by very effective self-evaluation processes.

The nursery enjoys excellent links with the parents and through the New Lodge Schools' Cluster, has access to a Parent Support Officer, and provides the parents with a wide range of parenting, educational and leisure courses. Parental evaluations of the courses indicate that they are highly valued. The nursery has also developed excellent links with a number of other nursery and primary schools in the area and makes very effective use of visitors and trips to extend and broaden the children's learning experiences.

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 very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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