

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ashgrove Nursery School,
Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Controlled Nursery School

Report of an Inspection in
March 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Ashgrove Nursery School is located in Newtownabbey; the children who attend come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a new principal and assistant teacher have been appointed. At the time of the inspection visit an additional learning support assistant was employed. There is an upward trend in the enrolment of newcomer children and an increasing number of children being identified with language and communication difficulties.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	26		
Attending part-time		26	26
Funded by Department of Education	26	26	26
With statement of special educational needs	#	#	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#	#	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#	
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#	9	8
With English as an additional language	#	#	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100%
Average attendance for the previous year.	94%
Number of days open in previous school year	183

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

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

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Thirty six of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses were highly positive about all aspects of the nursery school. In particular, they highlighted their appreciation of the welcoming and nurturing environment, the effective leadership, the care of the staff and their children's progress in learning. The staff report a strong sense of teamwork and a shared commitment to each child and their families.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are well motivated and eager to learn; they are progressing very well across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. Those children who require support with aspects of their learning are supported effectively to access the curriculum and are progressing well under the skilful guidance of the staff.
- The children make independent decisions about their choice of activities and manage the daily routines with confidence. Their social skills are very well developed; they show respect for the environment, the staff and for one another. Most of the children can sustain and develop their own ideas independently during play and in collaboration with other children.
- The children use an increasing range of vocabulary to describe what they are doing, recount their personal experiences, retell stories and ask questions. They refer to books independently and almost all of the children listen very attentively during whole group story sessions. They recognise print in the environment as they register themselves and where it is incorporated into the role play areas; the children have a high level of interest in mark-making and emergent writing. Those children for whom English is an additional language are progressing well in their communication skills; they are well integrated, can follow simple instructions and recognise and use an increasing range of English words.
- The children understand early mathematical concepts and use associated language relating to number, shape, size and measurement as an integral part of their play and daily routines. They care for the environment through, for example, recycling waste and watering the plants.
- The children's fine motor skills and use of equipment such as pencils, brushes and tools are well developed. They are confident in their abilities to run, pedal a range of wheeled toys with control, climb, dig, and transport materials.
- The children's imaginative play is highly developed and sustained; they take on roles very purposefully in the "Subway" cafe, re-enact caring family roles in their home play and repair cars as mechanics in the car workshop. In the creative areas, they initiate musical performances, explore patterns and produce imaginative paintings and drawings.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff provide a very creative, stimulating and language-rich learning environment throughout the whole nursery; there is a wide range of quality learning experiences available for the children.

- The consistently high quality of the interactions between the staff and the children to promote learning and language is a key strength within the nursery. The staff are sensitive, nurturing and affirmative in their approach; they take time to listen, support, and build on the children's own ideas. They frequently extend the children's thinking, model the use of mathematical language, introduce books into play and encourage close observation and investigation.
- The detailed planning which is implemented effectively, by the whole staff team, identifies progression in the learning, takes into account the children's own ideas and is makes use of assessment information to identify individual needs. The staff also use assessment information well to keep parents informed about their child's progress and to identify next steps in their learning journey. The children who have additional learning needs are identified early and are very well supported through skilful use of strategies both within the classroom and during individual and smaller group sessions. The close links developed between the parents, the school and other agencies promotes an effective, holistic approach to support.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the pre-school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The nurturing ethos and excellent working relationships at levels fosters a positive climate for young children to learn and develop and involve closely their parents in their early education.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership is excellent; it fosters a reflective, creative and innovative approach to the work within the nursery. There is a strong sense of teamwork in which the contributions of staff, parents, governors and the children are all utilised and valued.
- There is a high level of confidence in the work of the governors. The board of governors are well informed, bring a broad range of relevant skills to their role and contribute meaningfully to the school improvement process.
- The school development plan and associated action plans are informed well by wide consultation; they identify relevant priorities, help build the capacity of the staff team and lead to improving outcomes for the children. There is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the nursery and clear evidence of ongoing development and improvement.
- A major strength within the nursery is the effective links with the parents which involves them in the life of the nursery and in their child's learning: for example, home visits, learning packs, stay-and-play sessions, nursery natter events and the effective use of technology all facilitate highly effective communication.
- In addition there are very effective links with a wide range of schools to which the children will transfer, promoting smooth transitions and actively raising awareness of progression in learning from nursery and into the Foundation Stage.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Ashgrove Nursery School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school sustains improvement.

Information on sessions and staff**Duration of sessions**

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
9:00-1:30	9:00-11:30	12:15-2:45

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	8
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	1	5
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	2	1
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0	1

Number of: *	
Students	3
Trainees	0

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements, progression and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with those involved with leadership and management, including the management group and the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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	-	51%-74%
A significant minority	-	10%-49%
A minority	-	1%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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