

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyclare Nursery School,
Ballyclare, County Antrim

Report of an inspection in
October 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Quantitative 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	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on 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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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

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;
- a meeting with the support and teaching staff; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Nine of the parents and four of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision, including the caring support provided by the staff and the wide range of experiences being provided for the children. The few issues raised have been shared with the leadership and management. The responses from the staff were wholly positive; they highlighted a strong team commitment to the children's welfare and progress in learning.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children¹, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Ballyclare Nursery School is located in the Grange housing estate in Ballyclare. The school provides six part time nursery classes. The children who attend come from a wide catchment area.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

¹ In the case of a Day Nursery this refers only to the DE-funded pre-school provision.

5. Achievements and standards

- The children clearly enjoy their learning and are progressing very well across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. A majority of the children are very well advanced in many aspects of their learning and development for the time of year.
- Almost all of the children make very confident independent choice of activities, manage the daily routines with confidence and settle to extended periods of concentrated and purposeful play. They are beginning to talk about their feelings and emotions, co-operate very well with each other and are making excellent progress in developing their social skills.
- Most of the children have well developed language and communication skills; they talk freely to the staff and one another about their home experiences, discuss what they are doing and develop their own ideas in both adult -supported and self-initiated group play. They have a high level of interest in print, mark-making and emergent writing within a variety of contexts. They refer to books independently as a part of their play and almost all listen very attentively and respond with interest during whole group story and rhyme sessions.
- A majority of the children use a very good range of early mathematical language as a natural part of their play and independently explore and investigate materials using their senses. The children engage in very well developed collaborative play in the home and shop areas and make creative and imaginative use of the art materials, construction and natural items to express their own ideas. They use tools and materials confidently to make patterns, create models and many are already making detailed representations within their art work.
- The children who have been identified as requiring additional help with their learning, and those of a younger age, are making good progress; they are settled, well integrated and responding very well to appropriate adult support and to visual aids.

6. Provision for learning

- An excellent range of learning experiences is provided across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The attractive, stimulating, language rich environment supports very well the children's language and their autonomy. The nursery operates an open plan approach allowing free access to all of the play areas within the school. The Principal and staff review and modify this arrangement as appropriate to the time of year and the needs of the children.
- The interactions between the staff and the children are of a high quality. The staff build positive and respectful working relationships with the children and foster a positive attitude to learning. They promote independence and settled play, build very effectively on the children's own ideas and model a wide range of language to promote communication skills, mathematical language, and thinking skills.

- The staff work collaboratively to plan and evaluate an effective pre-school programme which is well matched to the needs and interests of the children. The detailed assessments of the children's progress are used well to identify relevant targets for individual children in planning and to report to parents. The staff are researching further methods for collating a range of information to assess the children as part of further improvement and development.
- The children who have additional learning needs are well integrated and supported very effectively to access the curriculum. The staff implement consistently a good range of approaches to support individuals. These strategies help the children to follow routines and develop their social skills and behaviours.
- The quality of pastoral care is excellent. There is a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment throughout the nursery in which the positive working relationships among the staff, parents and children are evident.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the nursery school is excellent. The whole staff team have a shared vision and appropriately high expectations for the children; all contribute to the quality provision being provided. The board of governors are kept well informed and are very supportive of, and involved in, continuing developments.
- There is effective school development planning and self-evaluation through the improvements in the provision being made year-on-year. The action plans are focused on priorities which are aimed at improving outcomes; they are closely linked to building staff capacity through high quality professional development.
- The links with other primary schools, pre-schools and local partnerships are used well to share practice and provide professional exchange which informs future work. Effective communication between parents and the main feeder primary school supports well the children's transition into year one.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

8. Overall effectiveness

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1. Details of children

Number of children in morning sessions:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending part-time	26	26	26
Funded by Department of Education	26	26	26
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#	#	#
Number of children in afternoon sessions:	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Attending part-time	26	26	26
Under 3 years of age	#	#	#
Funded by Department of Education	26	26	26
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#	#	#

* 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.	9.6%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.56%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

2. Duration of sessions

Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
9:00-11:30	12:30-3:00

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	6	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	3	2
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1	

Number of: ***	
Students	1

*** Total placements since September of current year

Source: data provided by the nursery school / playgroup.

fewer than 5

N/A not available

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