

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballyhenry Nursery School,  
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2015

*eti*

*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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## Quantitative terms

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 in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Context	1
3. Focus of inspection	1
4. Overall findings	1
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision	3
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Conclusion	4
Appendices	

## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

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

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

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with a small group of parents; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The parental responses to the questionnaire and the views of parents and carers expressed during a meeting with the reporting inspector indicate a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the nursery school. In particular the parents appreciate the dedicated and approachable staff who value each child as an individual, the very good levels of communication to them from the nursery and the good progress being made by their children. The staff responses were wholly positive and in particular they reported appreciation of the opportunities for continued professional development.

## 2. Context

Ballyhenry Nursery School is located in a well developed area of Newtownabbey in the midst of privately owned and rented housing developments. The nursery, which operates two full-time nursery classes, attracts children from a very wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a new principal has been appointed and took up post in February 2012.

## 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

## 4. Overall findings

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>

## Key findings of the inspection

### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very engaged in and positive about their learning. Many of the children enter the nursery with good language and play skills and continue to make very good progress in their learning across all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The small number of children whose language, attention and social skills are less well developed are supported effectively and are also making good progress.
- The children are very well settled and almost all play productively with high levels of concentration and perseverance. They make independent choices during the free play and snack times and co-operate well with the daily routines. The children are developing very well their social skills; they collaborate well during play and are often helpful and caring towards one another.
- Most of the children communicate very effectively with the staff and with each other. They recall and recount their experiences, talk about what they are doing, answer questions and listen attentively during group story and rhyme sessions. There is a high level of interest in mark making and emergent writing through a range of meaningful age appropriate contexts. The children enjoy browsing through books throughout the session and respond well during group stories. A majority of the children use a very good range of language skills and general knowledge to engage in sustained conversations and develop their play to a mature level. Those with less developed language and communication skills are making good progress in developing their attention and listening skills, confidence and oral fluency.
- The childrens art work is very well developed. They are confident to use a wider range of materials and techniques to produce detailed representations of people and objects in their environment. They use the small construction materials to plan and make imaginative models. Many of the children take on roles imaginatively and collaboratively as they participate in contextual play in, for example, the vet, hairdresser and mud kitchen activity areas. The children participate well in a wide range of action songs and rhymes.
- A majority of the children show an interest in sorting, counting and making comparisons naturally during their play. A significant minority of children are beginning to show a well developed understanding of early mathematical concepts and are beginning to use the appropriate language associated with number, shape and size. There is a high level of involvement from the children when investigating the properties of natural materials in the sand, water and dough and an interest in environmental topics related to growing and recycling.
- The children are developing well their fine and gross motor skills though a good range of smaller equipment and tools indoors and through energetic physical play outdoors.

## **6. Provision**

- The high quality of all of the staff interactions with the children is a key strength in the nursery. The staff have a good shared understanding of the pre-school curriculum. They provide consistent, caring and sensitive support to the children and promote settled and productive play throughout the session. They spend sustained periods with individuals and groups of children effectively extending their language, stimulating their thinking and building on their ideas. The children identified with additional learning needs are well integrated into the classes and are given very caring, nurturing support to increase their independence, and to help them make smooth transitions between activities and settle to tasks.
- The detailed planning identifies the learning to be promoted through the play and is implemented consistently by the whole staff team. It is evaluated regularly, highlights progression in the use of materials and guides the delivery of a broad and balanced pre-school curriculum both indoors and outdoors. In order to build on this very good practice further, the staff should now consider how to use all of the available space within the nursery to best effect and integrate more fully the children's own ideas into the planning. There are systematic processes in place to track and record the children's achievements. This information is used well to inform parents of their children's progress and for the early identification of any specific learning needs. The individual education plans are detailed and relevant; they guide the staff effectively in meeting these children's individual needs.
- The learning environment is attractive, stimulating and well resourced. The children have daily access to a wide range of suitable activities both indoors and outdoors which they clearly enjoy.
- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. Key features of the pastoral care include the warm, caring and inclusive ethos in which each child is valued and supported. The children and staff are very respectful of one another and the children's behaviour is very good. The parental role as the child's first educator and their contributions to the life and work of the nursery are valued.
- The children are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through relevant topics in the curriculum that include a healthy break and regular opportunities for energetic physical play.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The nursery school is effectively led and managed. The principal, who has been in post for approximately three years, fosters a strong team approach and has a clear vision for the ongoing development of the nursery. There is a culture of reflective practice among the whole staff team and a willingness to share good practice and learn from others through visits to other settings, and by attending a range of training and clustering events with other professionals.

- The school development plan is based on a wide consultation with staff and parents and is closely linked to staff development planning. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and there is clear evidence of continuous improvement in, for example, the development of work with the parents, links with the adjacent primary school and aspects of the curriculum. In order to improve the self-evaluation process further the action plans need to be more clearly focused on more specific outcomes in the childrens learning.
- There are very good links with the parents, the local primary school and a range of other health professionals. The parents are provided with a very good range of information about the nursery, their child's progress and on how to support their child's learning at home. In addition, very good use is made of parent's expertise and relevant visitors from the local community to enhance the childrens learning experiences further.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery school is very good and the quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Health and safety**

1. The bark covered paths on the sloping outdoor play area have a very steep gradient leading to a drop straight on to tarmac. This is a potential hazard which needs to be risk assessed and managed effectively to ensure the children's safety is maintained whilst not impeding their access to the attractive outdoor area play.



## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYHENRY NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	26	26	
Attending part-time			
Under 3 years of age*			
With statement of special educational needs	1	1	
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	3	3	
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3	3	
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	2	3	
With English as an additional language	2	1	

\* Denotes less than 5

\* 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.	100%
Average attendance for the previous year.	89.4%

2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	2	
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	2
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)		
Special Needs Assistant		

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	

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

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2015

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)