

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Ballysally Nursery School, Coleraine, County Londonderry

Controlled Nursery School DE Ref No (311-6263)

Report of an Inspection in June 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

Ballysally Nursery School is situated in the Ballysally estate on the outskirts of Coleraine. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding area. Since the last inspection, a new assistant teacher and two additional assistants with specific responsibilities for Nurture and Sensory Programmes are in place.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Funded by Department of Education	26	26
Without a statement but receiving therapy of support from other professional professionals for special educational needs	*	*
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	*	*
At CoP stages 3 or 4	*	*
Transferred as part of a Sure Start 2 year old programme	8	10
Who participated in other Sure Start services	*	*

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2	52
Average percentage attendance for the previous year	96
Number of days open in previous school year	189

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

Five of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The parental responses were highly positive about all aspects of the provision. In the written comments they praised the commitment of the staff and the progress and growth in confidence experienced by their children. The staff responses were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the nursery, in particular the positive working climate and team approach to meeting the holistic needs of the children. A summary of the questionnaire responses were shared with the principal and a representative from the board of governors.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, 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 capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children are making very good to excellent progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They engage productively and enthusiastically in the activities provided, and play collaboratively for sustained periods of time. The children's self-management skills are very well established as they move confidently through the routines of the day including: self-registering for and accessing the informal snack routine; transitioning between play activities; and, tidying up and managing their personal care independently.
- The children have very good levels of awareness of both themselves and their peers; they take responsibility for their actions and self-regulate their behaviours throughout the day. Their well-developed skills in managing their feelings and emotions enhance well the quality of their social play and personal development, and they resolve conflict situations with minimal adult assistance.
- The children's language and understanding is progressing very well in line with their individual stages of development. Most communicate enthusiastically and confidently with staff and visitors and their peers. The children listen attentively to the regular story sessions, dramatize characters in the story and create musical accompaniment to portray atmosphere; most show an interest in books throughout the day. They engage in a wide variety of early mark making opportunities in both role-play and in creative outdoor settings. The children's understanding of key mathematical concepts is developing well, and they use the language of number, shape, time and measure confidently during play and the routines of the day.
- The children engage creatively in stimulating singing and dancing sessions, and thoroughly enjoy performing for staff and each other. A key strength is the children's ability to initiate and develop their own highly creative ideas through their art work. They organise materials independently and experiment confidently with colour, texture and design using a wide range of materials, including those they bring from home, to develop their own ideas in their highly creative art work.
- The children explore their natural outdoor environment with great enthusiasm. They negotiate and collaborate together to design and test their own structures, made with the wide range of large construction materials available.
- The children identified with additional learning needs are making very good progress. They respond well to the support of the adults and a range of visual strategies and cues and are becoming increasingly independent.

6. Quality of provision

- The staff create a nurturing, child-centred and inviting learning environment to engage the children's interests and encourage and progress their creative thinking, problem solving and self-reliance. The indoor and extensive outdoor play areas provide a wide range of stimulating and challenging learning opportunities across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. In particular the outdoor area provides very good opportunities for the children to develop their natural curiosity of the world around them, and their gross motor and core strength skills during physical play.
- The detailed written planning informs progression in learning throughout the year and is implemented consistently by the whole staff team in their work with the children. The children's creative thinking processes are well documented and displayed through photographs, the children's own comments and examples of their work. Information gained through staff interactions with and observations of the children is used well to inform future learning and to meet their individual needs. At the point of the inspection the staff were trialling a range of approaches to tracking the children's progress and have identified the need to ensure that sufficient information is systematically recorded for each child in a manageable way.
- The staff's interactions with the children are almost always of a very good quality. They are skilful in promoting and sustaining learning and developing the children's thinking and understanding. A key strength is the intuitive and purposeful use of appropriate open-ended questions to engage and extend the children's problem-solving skills during both play and social times.
- The needs of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are well met in a highly inclusive and supportive environment. Individual education plans outline specific targets and staff monitor progress regularly in conjunction with parents and relevant agencies.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery's approach to care and welfare of the children impacts positively on their learning and development. The dedicated nurture support and additional home-links have enhanced the holistic development of the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the nursery promote a collaborative and highly child-centred approach to meeting the needs of all of the children. Staff share a vision for ensuring high quality provision and demonstrate creativity in their strategic thinking. Specialist expertise amongst the staff is used well to develop their skillset, and in-house training, guided by current research and knowledge of best practice, supports well their continuous professional development and the improvement process of the nursery.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very well informed about all aspects of the nursery and they recognise and support the need to work collaboratively with parents to meet the needs of the children.

- While the leadership and management recognise the need to develop further aspects of their written school development plan, they have identified clear and relevant priorities with associated actions to promote improvements. There is clear evidence of the impact of these actions and the associated staff development in bringing about improvements including: the enhanced engagement with parents; the quality of the outdoor learning experiences; and, the skill of the staff to deliver an increasingly child initiated approach to learning and teaching.
- The staff place a high value on the role of the parents and the local community. They provide a wide range of opportunities for parents and families to become involved in the nursery through, for example, the Stay and Play sessions, the Forest-School programme and the Ballysally Integrated Community nurture programme. The parents are supported to enhance their home learning environment through the use of learning packs and the regular information on their child's progress. There are well-established and purposeful links with the main feeder primary school, and the children's smooth transition process from nursery is further enhanced with regular home-link visits by nursery staff.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments.

However the nursery needs to:

- ensure that a number of policies are updated to reflect the most recent safeguarding guidance from the Department of Education.

9. Overall effectiveness

Ballysally 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 sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.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:

- meetings with the principal and nursery staff; and
- a meeting with the chairperson of the Board of Governors; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management¹:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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