

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cookstown Nursery School,
Cookstown, County Tyrone

Report of an inspection in
June 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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 and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with children, and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a discussion with the staff;
- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Thirty-six percent of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire and almost all were wholly positive. In their additional written comments, the parents praised the caring, approachable and hard-working staff and principal and the excellent experiences their children had in the nursery school. Almost all of the staff responded to the questionnaire and their responses were wholly positive.

2. Focus of inspection

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

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

3. Context

Cookstown Nursery School is situated in the Coolnafranky Demesne, Cookstown, County Tyrone. Currently, 49 pre-school education programme funded children attend the two full-time classes in the nursery school. The principal was appointed in September 2015. The school has a long established cross-community link with the local maintained nursery unit and with a maintained nursery school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children are well settled, confident and very highly motivated in their learning; they settle very quickly and calmly to their activities and spend prolonged periods in sustained and purposeful play. They respond well to the nursery routines and their behaviour is very good.
- The children communicate very well with each other and with the staff and visitors. They talk about their personal experiences and their play and share ideas readily with their peers and staff. The children make very good use of the many opportunities for early mark-making and show a keen interest in books, stories and rhymes.
- The children are developing very well their fine motor skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination as they work very precisely with smaller equipment and tools. They enjoy balancing, climbing, digging, pedalling and energetic play outdoors. There is concentrated, child-initiated exploration and investigation of natural materials at the sand, water and outdoor play areas.
- The children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts, such as, number, measures and positional language; they use appropriately mathematical language during play, both indoors and outdoors. They use creatively a wide range of materials to represent their ideas and take great pride in their work. The children engage in imaginative and sustained collaborative role-play in the range of available role-play areas.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff have created an attractive, child-centred and well-organised learning environment; the provision for learning in the outdoor area is a particular strength of the nursery school. The organisation of the learning environment supports very well the children's own choices and independence. The daily routines are well established and are used effectively to promote the children's learning.
- The staff are all caring and supportive in their interactions with the children and they engage them with a friendly, caring and positive approach. Almost all of the staff interactions are of a high quality and promote the children's learning and development. In the best practice, the staff extend effectively the children's ideas, language and thinking. The group story was very well managed to engage effectively the children's interest.
- There is very good provision made for children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The children are identified early and they are well integrated into the nursery school; their needs are well planned for and supported effectively by the staff. The respectful working relationships and liaison between the staff, the parents and other relevant agencies promotes a consistent approach to meeting the children's needs.
- The play programme is broad and balanced and has a clear focus on the children's learning and development. The staff have an effective system in place for observing and recording the children's progress and very good use is made of the information gathered to inform future planning.

- The quality of the pastoral care is very good. There is a welcoming, positive, inclusive ethos which impacts on the work of the nursery school. This work is well supported by the very good working relationships between the staff, parents, children and governors.
- The nursery school gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity; the children learn how to make healthy food choices, enjoy healthy snacks, and participate in a range of energetic physical activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal has a clear strategic vision for ongoing improvements within the nursery school. She is supported well by the skilful staff team who work collegially to review and evaluate provision and to provide high quality care and education for the children.
- The school development plan is underpinned by consultation with staff, parents and governors and by the continuous process of self-evaluation which has identified appropriate areas for development in the work of the nursery school. The supporting action plans have clear, well-focused targets which guide effectively the work of the staff. The action plans would, however, benefit from a more child-centred approach to target setting.
- The nursery school has developed effective links with the parents through, for example, the regular informative newsletters, the stay and play sessions and the cross-community activities organised with the local nursery unit and nursery school.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

8. Overall effectiveness

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON COOKSTOWN NURSERY SCHOOL, COOKSTOWN

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	27
Attending part-time		
Under 3 years of age*	*	*
Funded by Department of Education	24	25
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**	*	*
With English as an additional language	*	*
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	0

* 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.	15
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.6%
Number of days open in previous school year	183

2. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
8:45 am -1:30 pm		

3. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	5
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3	4
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	2	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	1	

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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