

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Malone Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
April 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

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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 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 with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

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

The small number of returns from the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the work of the playgroup and also highlighted concerns relating to communication with parents and personal issues.

2. Context

Malone Nursery School is a privately owned pre-school located in the grounds of the Kings Hall Complex in Belfast. Since the last inspection, the nursery has moved to new larger purpose-built accommodation and operates two sessions in separate playrooms. At the time of the inspection, there were 46 pre-school children enrolled in the nursery. The children come from a wide catchment area.

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

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

5. Achievements and standards

- Most of the children settle quickly to their chosen activity and appear relaxed and happy in their new surroundings. While most of the children play collaboratively and purposefully, a minority of the children, across the two playrooms, exhibit challenging behaviour that, at times, impacts negatively on the other children. The staff need to implement more effective behaviour management strategies to address this issue.
- The children engage well in imaginative play and are confident in using a range of small and large tools and equipment. Most of the children listen attentively during the large group story sessions and join in at appropriate times. Many of the children's individual drawings, paintings and model-making are representational and show good attention to detail.
- The organisation of the circle time and the snack routine need to be reviewed in order to make more effective use of all time to promote learning, ensure that the children are more familiar with the rules of play and that opportunities to develop their independence are fully exploited.

6. Provision

- There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the nursery and the working relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The staff are caring and supportive to the children.
- In both playrooms, the staff join willingly in play with the children promoting their self-esteem and language. In the best practice observed, the adults responded effectively to the children's interests, suggestions and needs and used skilful questioning to promote their thinking, to encourage them to provide extended responses and to develop their levels of independence. This good practice needs to be disseminated consistently across both playrooms.
- The staff's planning indicates that the children have opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, however, opportunities for the development of the children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills are under-developed. The staff need to adopt a more rigorous approach to evaluating the children's responses to the planned activities and use the information to plan for future learning and teaching. The staff plan to develop further the outdoor play facilities.
- The staff know the children well and collate useful observations for each child. They are aware of the children in the group who need additional support with aspects of their learning and have drawn up individual education plans to help meet their needs. They now need to link more clearly the observations of the children into the written plans and ensure there is sufficient interest, challenge and progression in the learning activities for all of the children.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is good. The strengths include the very positive working relationships between the staff and the children, and the welcoming atmosphere that permeates the pre-school.

- The pre-school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following area needs to be addressed. The child protection training for both the designated and deputy-designated members of staff needs to be urgently updated.
- The pre-school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and life-styles including, for example, the provision of a healthy snack.

7. Leadership and management

- All of the staff work collaboratively as a team. The nursery manager is also the early years specialist for the nursery and, in recent times, has focused primarily on a smooth transition to the new premises for all parties. The processes of self-evaluation and development planning are at a very early stage. It would now be appropriate to use the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report as the key priorities for the development of the pre-school.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

The areas for further development are the need:

- to implement positive behaviour management strategies to encourage more settled play; and
- to develop the processes of self-evaluation and development planning in order to address the areas identified in the report and address future improvement and development needs at all levels.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION MALONE NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	46	
in their immediate pre-school year	46	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	46	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2		
with a statement of special educational needs		
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	8	
with English as an additional language	6	
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
2½ hours	3½ hours

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	5	4
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	7	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1	
New appointments within previous 12 months		

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	2

*** Total placements since September of current year

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