

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Mossley Nursery School,  
Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
January 2015

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*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:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
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 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 expressed during a meeting with the reporting inspector indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the educational and pastoral provision provided by the nursery school. In particular the parents appreciate the professionalism demonstrated by the staff team, the effective school to home communication and the children's good progression in their learning and development. The staff responses indicate a positive and strong team approach to the development process within the nursery school.

## 2. Context

Mossley Nursery School has its own grounds, situated on the Hazelburn Road, Newtownabbey, adjacent to Mossley Primary School. The nursery operates one full-time nursery class and the two part-time nursery classes. All of the children are in their immediate pre-school year and they come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a new principal, new part-time teacher and two new nursery assistants have been appointed.

## 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>Outstanding</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

## Key findings of the inspection

### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children clearly enjoy their nursery experiences and are developing very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning. They are making very good progress in their overall learning and development in line with the Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education.
- The children are independent and confident as they choose activities and take responsibility for themselves and their environment during the daily routines. Most of the children sustain very productive and well developed play for lengthy periods, persevering at tasks and taking pride in their achievements. The children are developing very well their social skills, forming friendships and work very collaboratively together in a wide range of play activities. The small number of children who occasionally require help to share and take turns are supported effectively by the staff and are making very good progress.
- The children are developing very well their language and communication skills. Many of the children are confident and articulate as they talk to the staff and each other about their own personal experiences. A majority of the children use their good conversational skills to communicate their ideas well and develop their imaginative play to a high level. The children are aware of print, enjoy experimenting with mark making across a range of age appropriate activities and a few are beginning to develop emergent writing skills. The children use books to access information naturally during play and enjoy stories both informally and during whole group teacher led sessions.
- The children are confident to experiment with colour and pattern using a wide range of materials and techniques and many are making simple representations of objects relating to their winter topic. The children's creative art work is very well developed. The children enjoy experimenting with musical instruments and participate well during group singing sessions. The children make excellent use of the resources to take on roles and create their own stories as they develop a wide range of imaginative role play both indoors and outdoors.
- The children are very curious and engage in a high level of investigation and exploration of natural materials using their senses during both indoor and outdoor play. They use a wide range of materials to build and construct models and make confident and appropriate use of tablet computers to be creative and record their achievements.
- Many of the children are beginning to develop an understanding of early mathematical concepts such as number, shape, time and comparison of size during their activities and the daily routines. A small number of children are using very well developed mathematical language naturally as they play and engage with the staff.
- The children are developing well their fine motor skills as they use tools, such as brushes, knives and small construction materials. They are also using very effectively their gross motor skills as they pedal, balance, run, transport materials, dig and climb as an integral part of their outdoor energetic play.

## 6. Provision

- The well organised and effectively managed nursery environment is open plan to facilitate a very good wide range of activities. The stimulating and language rich learning environment is very child centred with all of the space in the playrooms being optimised to provide distinct richly resourced and accessible areas for learning. In addition, there is a large and well resourced outdoor area which is used well each day. The children's own art work, books, relevant environmental print and a wide range of natural resources are integrated well to enhance the learning environment further.
- The detailed planning for both indoor and outdoor play provides a clear guide to the staff team who have a very good shared understanding of the pre-school curriculum and how to develop effectively the children's language and learning through the activities. The planning is evaluated and linked to the staff's assessment information to guide specific support for individual children who need it. The recent focus on planning for progression in skills and the emphasis on tracking the children's wellbeing provides useful guidance on progression and challenge in the children's learning and development. The staff are very reflective and continuously strive to improve their self-evaluation, planning and assessment processes. They have been making good progress in developing their new methods of assessment as they trial and evaluate new approaches for recording the children's progress using information and communication technology (ICT).
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are well integrated into the nursery and are very well supported by the staff. Their individual education plans are well focused with relevant and measurable targets and are implemented effectively through the nursery day. The staff have had relevant training to continually build their capacity to meet the increasingly diverse range of additional needs of children who attend the school. The staff are developing useful links with Hillcroft Special School as part of the nursery schools CRED programme<sup>1</sup> to up-skill staff in this area and to develop community relations.
- The staff team engage in interactions of a high quality with the children during their play, daily routines and group sessions. They listen sensitively to the children, acknowledge, support and build on their ideas. They frequently extend well the children's language, thinking and learning through skilful and meaningful exchanges.
- The outstanding pastoral care is exemplified by the happy, inclusive and child centred ethos which values and respects each child. There are very good working relationships across the whole school community.
- The children have excellent opportunities to talk about healthy eating through the planned curriculum and regular opportunities for extensive energetic physical activity to promote a healthy lifestyle.

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) programme provides teachers and leaders with a wide range of related information and resources to inform practice and to develop links with other organisations and communities.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The school is led and managed very effectively by the principal who is highly reflective and enthusiastic about developing high quality child-centred pre-school education. The whole staff team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and all contribute well to the strong team approach. The very effective school development planning process is based on wide consultation with parents and staff. A range of relevant data is used to set the key priorities and there are clear action plans which are regularly monitored and reviewed. There is clear evidence of ongoing improvement linked to continuous professional development for the principal, teaching and support staff.
- There are effective links with the parents, a range of relevant external support agencies, local community groups and the main feeder primary schools. The parents are provided with a very good range of relevant information and are offered additional classes and programmes to support them in their role as their child's first educators.
- On the basis of the evidence 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 outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON MOSSLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

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

\* 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.	95%

2. *Duration of Sessions*

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4½ hours	2½ hours	2½ hours

3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	1	2
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)		3
Special Needs Assistant		

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

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



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