

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Stanhope Street Nursery  
School, Belfast

Controlled nursery school

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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CUSTOMER  
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## 1. Context

Stanhope Street Nursery School is a double unit nursery school located in north Belfast. The children attending the nursery school come from a wide catchment area and a significant minority are in their penultimate preschool year. At the time of the inspection a temporary teacher was employed. The nursery school has a Shared Education partnership link with another naíscóil and nursery unit in north Belfast. A high number of children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	26	26
Under 3 years of age*	12	13
Funded by Department of Education	26	26
With statement of special educational needs	#	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	5	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	13	12
With English as an additional language	#	6
Transferred as part of a Sure Start 2 year old programme	0	#
Who participated in other Sure Start services	0	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	95%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

**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

N/A not available

## 2. Views of parents and staff

Most of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the parental responses and the additional written comments were highly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the nursery. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring approachable staff, the wide range of experiences on offer and the progress made by their children. The staff responses were also highly positive and highlighted the strong sense of team spirit and the child centred approach to their work. A summary of the responses from the questionnaires has been shared with the principal and chair of the board of governors.

## 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Very good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

#### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The children engage in purposeful and focused play; exploring and investigating the environment and producing work of a high standard for their age and stage of development.
- The children interact very well with each other and with the staff and visitors; they can make independent choices, are inquisitive, talk confidently about their play and experiences, and take pride in their work and achievements.
- The children are familiar with the routines and rules of the nursery, listen attentively during the group story sessions and show a keen interest in books. They produce detailed representational artwork and many show an interest in early mark making and are beginning to recognise some letters and numbers.
- The penultimate preschool children, newcomer children and those who require support with aspects of their learning are very well integrated into the group and are making very good progress in line with their ability and stage of development.

#### 6. Quality of provision

- The staff are in the process of trialling revised methods of planning, observation and assessment and report positive evaluations of the methods to date. The written documentation is comprehensive and guides the staff well in their work with the children. The planning identifies clearly the learning potential of the planned activities and takes account of the individual needs, interests and responses of all the children to ensure variety and appropriate challenge in their learning.
- Through their engagement with and observations of the children, the staff know the children very well and share information on their progress with the parents throughout the year in a variety of ways. The documentation specifying the support provided and the progress made for those children who require assistance with aspects of their learning and development, outlines appropriate targets and strategies to help ensure the children's needs are fully met. Valuable links have been established with appropriate support agencies to assist in this work.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children are generally of a very good standard. The staff join willingly in the children's play and generate interest and a sense of fun in many of the activities. In the best practice the staff build effectively on the children's personal interests and experiences, ask open-ended questions, recap on previous learning and promote an awareness of the world around them.

- The organisation of the day is well structured and provides for lengthy periods of indoor and outdoor play with smooth transitions between key times in the programme. Aspects of the snack routine need to be reviewed to ensure more progressive opportunities to promote learning during the routine. The dinner routine promotes very well the children's independence, social skills and language development.
- The staff present an attractive and organised learning environment for the children, both indoors and outdoors. The available space is used very well and provides valuable opportunities for the staff and children to participate in collaborative play across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. While there is a range of good quality resources with some natural and authentic items incorporated into areas of play, this practice should be included on a wider and more regular basis to enhance further the learning opportunities provided for the children.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on their learning and development. The children are forming positive relationships with the adults and one another which is evident in their personal and social skills.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management of the nursery promotes very good teamwork and a shared vision for providing high quality education. The approach to development planning and self-evaluation is reflective and is based on a culture of continuous improvement in the best interest of the children and ongoing evaluation of all aspects the work of the nursery. Appropriate areas have been identified for improvement.
- The board of governors are aware of their responsibility as a governing body and support the staff well in their work. Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of leadership and management evaluated. The leadership of the nursery work well within the constraints of a limited budget; however, the lack of time afforded to allow the principal to carry out the necessary duties of a teaching principal needs to be addressed.
- Very good links have been established with the parents to involve them in the education of their child and the life and work of the nursery. Appropriate information is passed to the feeder primary schools to aid the transition of the children.

## **8. Safeguarding**

- During the inspection, the nursery provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education (DE). However, there is a need to review aspects of the school's child protection and associated policies to ensure that they reflect more fully the most recent guidance from the DE. There is also a need to ensure that all governors attend the necessary safeguarding training.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Stanhope Street 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 school sustains improvement.

**Health and Safety**

1. The sharp edges on the external shutter frame at the side of the nursery present a health and safety hazard to the children; and
2. During inclement weather the playground surface becomes slippery and presents a health and safety risk to the children and staff. This also impacts negatively on the opportunities provided for the children to engage in energetic physical play.

### **Inspection method and evidence base**

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at:

<https://www.eti.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:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management, including the chair 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 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 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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