

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Carnhill Nursery School,  
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection  
in February 2012

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CARNHILL NURSERY SCHOOL, LONDONDERRY

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	13	12
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	***	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	11	12
With English as an additional language	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.	***
Average attendance for the previous year.	91%

\*\*\* Redacted figure 5 or fewer

### 2. Duration of Sessions

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

### 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	1	0

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

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

### 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	67%
Number of written comments	21

**CARNHILL NURSERY SCHOOL, GLENGALLIAGH, LONDONDERRY BT48 8DU  
(211-6267)**

**INSPECTED: 9 FEBRUARY 2012**

1. Carnhill Nursery School is situated in the Greater Shantallow area in Derry City. The children come from a wide catchment area. A new teaching Principal, a former member of the teaching staff, has been appointed since the last inspection in 2005. The Principal has recently returned to work following maternity leave; during this period, the assistant teacher also carried out the duties of acting-Principal.

2. 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.

#### CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are well-behaved, eager-to-learn and display pride in their work. They are secure in learning through the well-organised daily routines and demonstrate very good progress in their overall development. The children are good listeners, confident, highly motivated and they are keen to talk to each other, the staff and visitors about their learning. During the inspection, the children engaged in lengthy periods of concentrated, productive and co-operative play; many are forming firm friendships. They were curious to explore the highly stimulating learning environment. The children explored the play opportunities independently and in groups, making choices about their activities and resources.

4. The children often engage in singing and story-telling. They demonstrate a keen interest in books; they refer to them frequently during play and enjoy listening to, recalling and telling stories in both large and small groups. The children choose books for information and enjoyment and make good use of them during role play. Many of the children engage in early mark-making and writing and a small number are beginning to show an interest in letters and print.

#### THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The children enjoy learning through access to a stimulating and attractive range of activities in the indoor and outdoor areas. On arrival, the children and at times their fathers, mothers and carers were observed playing with the educational activities and enjoying books in the entrance area. The children display independence and are able to make choices during play. Transitions from one activity to another are well-planned to support the children to develop conversations and social skills.

6. The daily routine offers a very good balance between activities freely chosen by the children and sessions organised by the staff. There are excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and, in particular, the development of the children's language is a key strength of the nursery's provision. The staff have appropriately developed an effective range of strategies to identify early and support the children to develop their language and communication skills.

7. The interactions between the staff and children are consistently of a high quality; the staff use every opportunity to promote the children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. The staff also promote enjoyment and learning through meaningful participation in the play activities. They use open-ended questions and help the children to make connections in their learning and the children are encouraged to investigate and to problem-solve. The children turn readily to the staff for help and support.

8. The staff have accessed training in a range of programmes and incorporate relevant strategies within their everyday planning to meet effectively children's specific needs. The staff have developed detailed individual education plans (IEPs) for those children experiencing difficulties in their learning. These plans are shared and reviewed regularly with the parents. The children identified as having special educational needs learn within an inclusive atmosphere and are making appropriate progress.

9. The staff work collaboratively to plan and review the programme to ensure progression in the children's learning and to guide the adults in their work with the children. The staff's evaluations are realistic and focus appropriately on the children's learning. The staff have a very good system in place for observing the children's learning; these observations form the basis of detailed assessments of each child's progress and effectively inform future planning.

11. The staff place a strong emphasis on parental involvement. Regular newsletters and a well-designed parents' noticeboard provide the parents with valuable information about the work of the nursery and highlight ways that they can become actively involved in the education of their child. A majority of the parents have contributed to the home-school programme to improve early literacy skills fostered through the tales of "Fudge and Custard" adventure weekends. Parents are also provided with support by the staff through the provision of school-based courses and information meetings.

12. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery school is outstanding. The children appear well-settled and confident, and their behaviour is exemplary. Among the strengths is the welcoming and inclusive ethos, the very positive working relationships at all levels and the priority given to the children's well-being and the promotion of physical activity.

13. The nursery has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

14. The nursery gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. This includes, for example, the clear emphasis on health promotion through all areas of the curriculum and the healthy snack routines. The children are also provided with daily opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical play outdoors.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

15. The Principal provides high quality leadership and management in all aspects of the nursery's provision. She has established a calm and purposeful ethos underpinned by good communication with the parents and the staff and all are highly committed to providing high quality pre-school provision. The Principal has targeted appropriate priorities for development and staff development is regular and ongoing through attendance of courses and clustering with other nursery schools.

16. The Principal has developed effective processes for self-evaluation. These processes are based on the school development planning DE regulations and are used appropriately to inform the nursery school development plan and associated action plans. The development planning process is effectively leading to continuous whole-school improvement.

17. The main strengths of the nursery are as follows:

- the welcoming, caring inclusive atmosphere that fosters the children's positive attitudes to learning and pride in their work;
- the valuable links with the nursery and the home which extend the children's learning beyond the school environment;
- the high quality interaction of the staff with the children that skilfully develops their language and communication skills;
- the early identification and extensive range of strategies used to support the children's individual needs, particularly the development of speech and language;
- the detailed planning and assessment to meet the needs of the independent, confident and eager-to-learn children; and
- the excellent leadership and management of the Principal, ably assisted by the assistant teacher, who effectively plans for continuous school improvement and the supportive teamwork of all the staff.

18. 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.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the inspection questionnaires. Of the 52 questionnaires issued, 67% were returned to the Inspection Services Branch; 21 also contained written comments. All of the responses from the parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision in the nursery. In particular, they expressed appreciation of the caring and committed Principal and staff, the happy learning environment and the wide range of learning experiences provided for the children. The responses from the staff and governors were also wholly positive. A summary of the responses has been shared with the staff and governors.

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