

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Castlereagh Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in March 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CASTLEREAGH NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	3	3
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	19.23%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants	2	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants - SN	1	0

Number of: ****	
Students	1
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	42%
Number of written comments	14

1. Introduction

Castlereagh Nursery School is situated in Clonduff Drive, off the Castlereagh Road in Belfast. It is accommodated within a purpose-built setting which has been extended recently to include an indoor physical play area.

At the time of the inspection, the nursery had just undergone significant maintenance work which was challenging for the children, the staff and the parents.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the nursery.

The views of the parents and staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Twenty-two of the parents (42%) responded to the questionnaire and 14 made additional written comments. Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaire were positive about the provision within the nursery. In particular, the parents expressed their appreciation of the dedicated staff; of the support and care shown to the children and their families; and for the regular information they receive to help them support their children's learning. The responses from the governors and staff were wholly supportive of the work of the nursery. All of the responses have been shared with the Principal, the staff and with the Vice-chairperson of the governors.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Very Good Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- The children are well-settled; they understand and follow the nursery routines confidently both indoors and in the outdoor play areas. They demonstrate very good levels of independence in choosing their play activities and resources and display good levels of responsibility for the care of the learning environment. They listen purposefully to each other during play and join enthusiastically in a wide range of songs and rhymes; they can follow quite detailed pictorial instructions and can copy simple patterns involving shape and colour.

- During the inspection, almost all of the children engaged in sustained, purposeful play, particularly in the garden centre and fire station role play areas; they also displayed a keen interest in books and used them confidently and independently throughout the session for information and enjoyment purposes.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the adult interactions with the children is consistently good or very good. In the most effective practice, the adults provide an appropriate balance between encouragement, support and challenge for the children; they model the use of the desired language and use effective questioning to extend the children's thinking and learning. There is a need for the staff to exploit further the potential learning opportunities inherent in the snack and lunch routines.
- The atmosphere throughout the nursery is welcoming and relaxed. Effective and purposeful use is made of all of the space available to extend the range of learning experiences available for the children and to enable the children from the two playrooms to mix and play together. There is a good balance between free play and adult-led activities and there are good to very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- Within each playroom, the staff's planning, observation and assessment practices, including for those children with special educational needs, are very good. The staff evaluates effectively the children's progress, identifies their individual needs and uses this knowledge to inform future actions. The staff has, appropriately, identified the need to develop further the planning for learning in the outdoor area. It will also be important for the team to agree a consistent format for recording the progress made by the children with special educational needs against their individual education plans.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is very good. This is evidenced through the staff's care for the children and through the respectful relationships at all levels.
- The nursery gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the provision of a healthy snack and through the tooth brushing routines. The routines need to be developed further to ensure that all children wash their hands before taking their snack.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

- The nursery is very well managed. The Principal sets high standards for the staff, the children and the parents; she is well-supported by the conscientious staff team who are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for the children.

- The staff reflects daily on the children's responses to the planned learning experiences and adapts the planning accordingly to meet the children's interests and needs. The staff members have carried out a self-evaluation of the overall quality of the provision within the nursery and identified appropriate priorities for improvement over the next three year period. There is evidence to indicate that the recent review of planning has led to an improved focus on the learning potential within the planned activities and to an improvement in the quality of the provision for the children.
- There are effective links between the staff and the parents. The parents receive very useful information about their children's learning through; the settling-in meeting in term one, the progress meetings in terms two and three, and the end of year written report. They are kept informed about the nursery's planned events and learning themes through the parent notice board and a monthly newsletter. It will be important to develop the newsletter further in order to provide the parents with more detailed information on how to support their children's learning at home. It will also be important for the governors and staff to consider how they might develop and sustain the parent programmes for which they have received training.
- The staff has developed good working relationships with a range of educational and medical professionals and has made effective use of the advice received to support individual children. There are very good pastoral links with the main primary schools to which the children transfer. The staff is currently consulting with the year one teachers in these schools about the sharing of more detailed curricular information in order to ensure progression in the children's learning as they move to the formal stage of their education.
- The nursery has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. There is a need, however, for the staff to provide clearer guidance to parents on how to raise a concern about a child's safety and to detail more specifically the role of the designated teacher within that process.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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