

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dungannon Nursery School,
Co Tyrone

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



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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 DUNGANNON NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	25
Attending part-time	0	1
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	*
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**		
At CoP stages 1 or 2**		
With English as an additional language	*	*

* 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.	9%
Average attendance for the previous year.	88.9%

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	1	2
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	3
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	1

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	42%
Number of written comments	11

1. Introduction

Dungannon Nursery School is situated in the town of Dungannon close to Dungannon Primary School. The nursery staff have almost all been in post since the last inspection in 2005. The assistant teacher and a teacher appointed since the last inspection operate a job share arrangement for Class 2. In addition, the nursery has changed the admission arrangements from dual-day to full-time nursery provision, with an enrolment capacity of 52, reduced from 78 at the time of the last inspection. The nursery is oversubscribed by applications for places.

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, staff, and management group were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fifty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents and twenty-two were returned, eleven with written comments. The staff and the management group also returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all of the aspects of the work of the nursery. The parents and the staff praised highly the care and education provided by the staff for the children.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery is good; the nursery has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the nursery has demonstrated the capacity to address. The inspectorate will monitor the nursery's progress on the area for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements	Good
Quality of Provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is good.

- The children and their parents are warmly welcomed on arrival to the nursery. The children are well-settled into the classrooms and have developed a clear understanding of the rules for play and routines of the day. The children co-operate well with one another and with the adults; some of them are developing firm friendships.

- A majority of the children need more encouragement to move from solitary play to co-operative play. Most of the children are beginning to take good care of their materials and tidy-up after play. They are able to self-manage at the snack table pouring their own drinks; however, this skill is not transferred to the dinner routine. The children need to have more effective adult involvement and interaction to stimulate conversation and learning at the snack times in both rooms.
- A majority of the children are at an early stage in language development, some of these are newcomer children that would benefit from more consistent support from all the adults to develop further their language skills.
- The children have good fine motor skills and are able to use scissors and paintbrushes well. They enjoy using the computer, sharing feelings, role-play, stories and rhymes, and exploring and experimenting in activities related to the world around us area of the pre-school curriculum.

5. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is very good. The staff work hard to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem through a supportive and caring ethos. The children display high levels of mutual respect for one another and the staff; their manners and behaviours in consideration of the needs of others are excellent.
- The nursery staff have created a bright and stimulating learning environment for the children, particularly in the outdoor area, which is greatly enhanced with natural materials and spring flowers. The children's work is; celebrated, presented attractively in the playrooms, labelled appropriately with the children's names, and annotated with text of their spoken words which is effectively developing the children's awareness of the written word.
- Effective communication has been established with the parents and outside agencies to support the children identified with special needs. The staff understand the needs of the children well and communicate relevant information about the children's progress and development to the parents. It is appropriate to keep under review the special needs policy and provision for children with communication difficulties or links with external support agencies. There are effective transitional arrangements made with the local primary schools to which the children transfer to year one.
- The staff often extend the children's language through singing, stories and rhymes and there are many instances where they build effectively on the children's interest and ideas. The staff do not, however, fully utilise all of the opportunities for learning from the activities. It is appropriate that the staff continue to embed the strategies they have acquired from a speech and language training programme to address the children's identified language deficits through the daily programme.

- The staff have developed effective methods for planning and assessment of learning in the pre-school programme. There is a good flow to the organisation of the day and the staff provide a lengthy period of free play wherein the children sustain very good concentrated play and learning.
- The children are provided with a healthy snack and regular physical activity in the stimulating outdoor area. The snack is generally used well to promote the children's independence; a few more opportunities could be developed further to promote the development and consolidation of the children's language, mathematical skills and self-help skills.

6. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The Principal sets a positive tone and promotes a caring learning environment for the children and good communication with the parents. The Principal needs to keep under review the teaching and learning processes and develop a shared understanding and consistency of approach for all staff in order to raise further the children's standards and achievements. The school development plan is concluding for this cycle and the Principal has identified appropriately the need to develop further the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning for the next three year cycle.
- The staff communicate effectively with the parents through parent education programmes such as; the Incredible Years Programme, newsletters, and feedback on the children's progress and development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery is good; the nursery has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement in the provision for learning which the nursery has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The main area for improvement is:

- the need to develop further the consistency of the teaching and learning to sustain high quality learning experiences for all the children.

The inspectorate will monitor the nursery's progress on the area for improvement.

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