

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Kircubbin Community Nursery  
School, Newtownards,  
Co Down

Report of an Inspection  
in February 2011

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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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION KIRCUBBIN COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL,  
NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN (413-6626)**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	27	26
Under 3 years of age*	0	13
With statement of special educational needs	1	1
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support for special educational needs	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	2	2
With English as an additional language	1	2

\* 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.		0%
Average attendance for the previous year.	Class 1	93.27%
	Class 2	87.25%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

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

**3. Details of Staff**

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

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

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

**4. Parental Questionnaires**

Number issued	53
Percentage returned	52.83%
Number of written comments	19

**KIRCUBBIN COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN,  
BT22 2SU (413-6626)**

**INSPECTED: 21 FEBRUARY 2011**

1. Kircubbin Community Nursery School is situated on an attractive site on the shores of Strangford Lough in the village of Kircubbin. It is accommodated in a purpose-built nursery school and serves the whole community. The children who attend come from a wide catchment area. The nursery operates two part-time classes of children. Almost half of the children attending the current afternoon session will attend for two years.

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. Almost all of the children demonstrate very high levels of independence and collaboration during their play and in their own self-management of daily routines and personal care. The children are respectful to the staff, each other and their environment; their behaviour is excellent. They are very well motivated and clearly enjoy their learning as they spend sustained periods of time concentrating at activities. Some of the younger children show a preference for solitary play supported by an adult as appropriate to their stage of development.

4. The children are confident to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they play and show curiosity and interest as they explore the wide range of interesting resources and materials available. Many of the children show an interest in and understanding of simple mathematical ideas and language; they count, make comparisons and show an early awareness of capacity and pattern.

5. Most of the children can express their ideas and ask for help with confidence. They have good oral language skills and often engage in sustained conversations during their play. A few of the younger children are more hesitant to engage in conversation but show understanding and interest in activities with adult support. The children show an interest in looking at books for information and listen attentively to large and small group story sessions; they participate in rhyme and song sessions enthusiastically. The children enjoy experimental mark-making and a few are beginning to show signs of emergent writing.

### **THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

6. The well organised, stimulating and richly resourced learning environment both indoors and outdoors very effectively supports all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The excellent use of photographs, captions, books and natural materials enhance the areas of play.

7. The staff, who are all warm, caring and supportive in their interactions with the children, foster settled and productive play. They listen carefully to the children and build effectively on their ideas often extending their thinking, vocabulary and mathematical language. They encourage close observation, investigation and problem-solving through modelling play and good use of appropriate open-ended questions. The staff adapt very effectively the level of their language and interactions when necessary to match the needs of individual children. Their interactions to support learning are at a consistently high level throughout the nursery day.

8. The staff plan and assess the children's progress collaboratively; they demonstrate a shared understanding of the learning to be promoted and a clear awareness of children's needs and levels of support required. The detailed planning provides a good framework for the implementation of a rich and broadly balanced pre-school curriculum; it is evaluated regularly and adapted to meet the needs of the full range of children. The nursery programme provides excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of pre-school curriculum. A particular feature of the nursery is the strong emphasis on creative and investigative play arising from their World Around Us topics and the nursery school's involvement in the eco-schools' initiative. Children's progress is tracked and regularly reviewed by the staff; follow-on planning takes account of these observations and evaluations.

9. The nursery is developing excellent links with the parents. Their views are valued and they are encouraged and supported to take an active part in their child's learning and development. Good pastoral links are being developed with local primary schools and there are good links with a range of appropriate support agencies.

10. The quality of pastoral care within this school is excellent. The strengths include the very inclusive and positive ethos based on excellent working relationships at all levels, the very settled behaviour and high levels of the children and the effective working relationships with the parents.

11. The nursery has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

12. The nursery gives very good attention to promoting the children's health and well being, including opportunities for a healthy fruit break and regular opportunities for physical activity.

13. The Principal, who has been in post for four years, is committed to providing high quality pre-school education working in partnership with the children's parents. She provides excellent leadership and management of the nursery and fosters a strong team spirit among her hard-working staff. The Principal is reflective of her practice and has developed a culture of self-evaluation; there is clear evidence of continuous improvement and development within the nursery. The commitment to the review and application of continuous training opportunities, including in-service training, has been an important part of this improvement process.

14. The key strengths in this nursery school include:

- the high quality of the learning environment both indoors and outdoors;
- the skill and expertise of the staff in promoting the children's care, language and learning;
- the excellent opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the children's very high levels of engagement and involvement in their learning and the excellent use of the natural environment to foster their interest and curiosity;

- the excellent links with the parents; and
- the excellent leadership and management of the Principal and the hard-working staff team.

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

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the Board of Governors (governors) to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Approximately 53% of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 19 parents provided additional written comments. The responses from the parents, staff and governors indicated their confidence in the Principal and the staff team to provide good quality pre-school education and pastoral care and the value of the nursery school to the local community. In particular they highlighted their appreciation of the quality learning environment, the commitment and the skill of the staff, their children's progress and the range of experiences provided. All of the responses have been shared with the Principal and the governors.

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