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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**McArthur Nursery School  
Belfast**

**December 2007**

## **REPORT OF A FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION IN McARTHUR NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST BT5 4FE (111-0002)**

The inspection in November 2005 highlighted strengths in the links with parents and the quality of the resources. It also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the quality of the staff's interaction with the children to promote language and learning; and
- the planning and assessment methods.

**In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the nursery school has taken place.**

- A new principal has been in post since September 2007.
- New classroom assistants have been appointed.
- The policies for child protection and pastoral care have been reviewed and updated.
- The Health and Safety issues raised in the previous report have been addressed.
- The staff have completed appropriate language training including "Language for Life" and "Hanon".
- The outdoor area has been developed; an area has been landscaped and additional resources added.
- The playrooms have been redecorated.
- The staff have benefited from visits to other pre-school settings.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a series of inspection visits to the nursery school as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visit on 3 December 2007 and also takes account of the findings of the visits in November 2006 and November 2007.

**The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group.**

- The staff's interaction with the children is of a higher quality throughout the nursery. Better use is made of open-ended questions and they are more consistent and effective in their promotion of the children's language, learning and thinking skills. There is a higher expectation of the children's capabilities; the children respond positively to these expectations.
- The learning opportunities for the children have been enhanced in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The children display greater concentration and autonomy in their learning. There is more effective promotion of the children's oral language, use of books and early marking and there is more sustained, imaginative play.

- The areas for learning are more richly resourced, resulting in greater challenge for the children and more evidence of productive play both indoors and outdoors.
- The daily timetable is organised more smoothly and more flexibly, resulting in better use of the time and daily routines to promote learning.
- The planning and assessment methods are more detailed and systematic and this ensures that the activities and the support provided are more closely matched to the children's stages of development.
- There is earlier identification of, and more focused support for, children who have additional needs.
- The new principal is fostering a strong sense of team-work among the whole school staff.

The nursery school has a basic development plan. The new principal has planned appropriately for this to be reviewed and updated in more detail as a matter of priority. The nursery is undergoing a period of transition under new leadership; there is clear evidence that the staff have worked very hard with the new principal to bring about significant improvements to the provision in recent months. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation are developed further as a means to bring about continuous improvement.

Good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are well met. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the school's response to the findings of the inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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