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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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

**Ashgrove Nursery School
Newtownabbey**

Inspected: November 2009

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ASHGROVE NURSERY SCHOOL,
NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM (311-6124)**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	52
Under 3 years of age*	0	1
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3	10
With English as an additional language	0	1

* 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.	3.9%
Average attendance for the previous year.	87%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	2½ hours	2½ hours

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	1

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	76
Percentage returned	49%
Number of written comments	16

**ASHGROVE NURSERY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 6LJ
(311-6214)**

INSPECTED: 9 NOVEMBER 2009

1. Ashgrove Nursery School is situated in purpose-built accommodation in the Carnmoney area of Newtownabbey. Since the last inspection some internal refurbishment has been carried out to create extended office space and a facility for children with special educational needs. A new assistant teacher was appointed in September 2008 as part of a job-share arrangement.

2. The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the governors and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A significant minority (49%) of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 16 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that the parents regard the nursery very highly and appreciate that it is a caring place where the children feel safe and secure, that the nursery is well thought of in the community and that the children are learning through the range of activities. All of the responses from the governors and the staff were wholly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the nursery. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the nursery.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is very good. Among the strengths are the caring and supportive ethos within the playrooms, the very positive working relationships at all levels, and the promotion of the children's well-being and self-esteem. The children respond well to the strategies promoted consistently by the staff to encourage positive behaviour.

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

5. The nursery gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children enjoy healthy breaks, have access to drinking water and have daily opportunities for energetic physical play in the outdoor area.

6. The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:

- Given the time of year, the children have settled very well and are familiar with the daily routines. They are confident and articulate and respond well to the topics and themes. They show a good interest in books and early writing. Many of their drawings and paintings show signs of representational detail.
- The staff are caring and supportive and effectively promote settled and co-operative play. At small group time, many of the interactions help develop the children's language and extend their thinking skills.
- The routines and transitions are well-managed and promote the children's confidence and independence. The daily timetable offers the children a broad range of activities which provide opportunities for the children to exercise choice and make decisions about their play.
- There are very good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum. The written planning clearly identifies the intended learning and the children's progress is carefully documented and shared regularly with the parents.

- Those children identified with special educational needs are integrated very well into the nursery and receive very valuable support from the whole staff team. Effective links have been established with the local Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST).
- The Principal and the staff work hard to keep the parents informed of and involved in the work of the nursery. A range of workshops have been provided including the “Incredible Years” programme offered by MAST, and the parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery’s self-evaluation processes.

7. The Principal has given long service to the nursery and manages the school very effectively. She has helped to establish a strong sense of team-spirit among the staff and gives high priority to their ongoing professional development. As a result, the nursery assistants are very skilful in supporting the children’s learning. The nursery has a comprehensive school development plan with appropriate targets for improvement. The staff meet regularly to plan and reflect on their practice and they have developed a systematic approach to self-evaluation. The Principal has also identified the need to keep the current job-share arrangements under review in the best interests of the children. It is appropriate that priorities for further development include a focus on early mathematical development and strategies to promote thinking skills, to ensure that all of the staff’s interactions with the children are of a consistently high standard.

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

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