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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**Department of Education**  
**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Ballyclare Nursery School**  
**Co Antrim**

**Inspected: March 2009**

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYCLARE NURSERY SCHOOL,  
CO ANTRIM (311-6220)**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>	<b>Class 3</b>
Attending full-time	0	0	0
Attending part-time	52	52	52
Under 3 years of age*	0	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	2	1	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	1	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	2	1
With English as an additional language	0	2	0

\* 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.	6%
Average attendance for the previous year.	90%

**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	3	2
Nursery Assistants	3	1
Qualified Nursery Assistants	3	1

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	3
Trainees	0

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

**4. Parental Questionnaires**

Number issued	156
Percentage returned	44%
Number of written comments	30

**BALLYCLARE NURSERY SCHOOL, CO ANTRIM, BT39 9EY (311-6220)**  
**INSPECTED: 19 MARCH 2009**

1. The nursery school is situated in the Grange Estate in Ballyclare. Most of the children come from the town and surrounding rural area. Since the last inspection, a new principal was appointed and took up post in March 2007. Some recent refurbishment work has taken place in order to create additional office space and a meeting area for parents and visitors.

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 (44%) of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 30 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated that almost all the parents regard the nursery very highly and appreciate that the staff are concerned for the well-being of the children, the children are learning through the range of activities, and the nursery is well thought of in the community. Almost all of the responses from the governors and the staff were wholly positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the pre-school centre. 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. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place, the ethos is very positive and relationships at all levels are very good. The staff have high expectations of the children and the atmosphere is one of mutual respect; the children are settled, confident and happy, and their behaviour is very good.

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

5. The nursery gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The nursery has a healthy eating policy and the children are given a range of healthy breaks throughout the week. The staff should ensure, however, that the children have access to drinking water and that all children have regular opportunities to engage in energetic physical play.

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

- The staff are caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. They are skilful in exploiting the learning potential within the play activities: they listen to the children, build on their ideas and help extend their language and thinking.
- The planned programme offers a broad range of appropriate and interesting activities, both indoors and in the outdoor play area. The staff have developed relevant profiles of the children's progress and achievements.
- The children enjoy their play and show high levels of independence and concentration. During the inspection, there were many instances of settled, co-operative and purposeful play, particularly in the creative and role-play areas, and the outdoor sand and water areas.

- There are good opportunities for learning in almost all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Particular strengths are the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, their interest in the world around them and the quality of their representational art work.
- Those children identified with special educational needs are integrated very well into the nursery and receive very valuable support from the staff team.
- The Principal and the staff work hard to build and maintain appropriate links with the parents, especially through the Extended Schools initiative. The school has developed a website, a range of workshops have been provided and the parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery's self-evaluation processes.

7. The Principal has been in post for two years and has worked hard to establish a sense of team-work among the staff. She has a clear vision for the future development of the nursery and is a very good role-model in her work with the children. She encourages the staff to reflect on aspects of their practice and they have been able to visit a number of other schools to observe a variety of approaches and methodologies. The nursery has a very comprehensive school development plan (SDP) which meets the requirements of The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The staff have identified appropriate areas for improvement, including the development of the outdoor area, the ongoing evaluation of the planning and assessment arrangements and the better management of space and resources through the recently developed open-plan system.

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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