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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

**Ballycolman Nursery School
Strabane**

Inspected: February 2008

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYCOLMAN NURSERY SCHOOL,
STRABANE**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	25	25
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	5	5
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	2	0
With English as an additional language	1	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.	12%
Average attendance for the previous year.	97%

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	2	0
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	2	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	49
Percentage returned	36.7%
Number of written comments	4

**BALLYCOLMAN NURSERY SCHOOL, STRABANE, CO TYRONE, BT82 9AQ
(211-6333)**

INSPECTED: 6 FEBRUARY 2008

1. The nursery school is situated in purpose-built accommodation in the Ballycolman Estate in Strabane. The children attending come from the areas of public and private housing near to the nursery school. At the time of the inspection, a substitute teacher was employed to cover the absence through illness of the assistant teacher.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery school through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and any issues raised have been shared with the staff. Those who responded expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the centre.

3. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the nursery school is very good. The nursery school has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection that comply with the circulars and guidance issued by the Department of Education. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The nursery school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has important strengths, with attention paid to the development and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity programmes to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- The nursery school is bright and spacious and the staff work hard to create an attractive learning environment both indoors and in the outdoor play area; a broad range of interesting activities and resources is provided.
- The children are settled, and their behaviour is very good. During the inspection, there were many examples of co-operative and purposeful play.
- The organisation of the session is well planned and provides a balance of extended periods of freely chosen play, and group activities which are led by the staff. The routines and transitions are unobtrusive and help promote the children's confidence and independence.
- Since the last inspection, the staff have worked hard to develop useful written planning; it shows progression in the use of resources across the areas of play, and the learning potential is clearly identified.
- There are satisfactory opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff's interactions with the children help support the children's personal, social and emotional development. During the inspection, the children showed a strong interest in early writing through well-developed imaginative role-play and there was a particular focus on the children's early mathematical development.

- The staff provide valuable support for those children with additional learning needs; they have developed helpful links with other professionals and agencies including the local SureStart project.

6. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.

- The staff need to exploit more fully the learning potential within the routines and play activities and to respond more effectively to the children's ideas and interests, in order to extend the children's thinking and understanding.
- The staff need to develop further the assessment methods to provide more evidence of progression in the children's learning and development across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.

7. The Principal manages the nursery school efficiently and the staff work well together as a team. They meet regularly to evaluate the planned programme and have implemented improvements in many aspects of the nursery school's provision since the last inspection. The school development plan outlines appropriate areas for review, including the provision of outdoor play and the promotion of the children's mathematical development. Action plans have been drawn up to help take forward these priorities. The staff should now begin to gather evidence of improvement in the children's learning as a result of this process of self-evaluation.

8. The nursery school has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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