

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Nursery School,
Newry

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST MALACHY'S NURSERY SCHOOL, NEWRY

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	8	8
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	3	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	3	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	8	6
With English as an additional language	6	3

* 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.	19%
Average attendance for the previous year.	75%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4 ½ hours		

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	1
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	1
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	3
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	81%
Number of written comments	30

1. Introduction

St Malachy's Nursery School is situated in Martins Lane, Carnagat, Newry; it is adjacent to St Malachy's Primary School. Most of the children come from the surrounding area.

2. Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from in-class observations and from a range of documentation provided by the nursery school.

The views of the parents, staff, and Board of Governors were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Fifty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents and forty-two were returned with thirty written comments. All of the staff and members of the Board of Governors returned the questionnaires with written comments. All of the returns from the questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the nursery school. The parents highlighted their children's enjoyment of the learning opportunities provided for them and the commitment of the staff to their children's welfare. The reporting inspector discussed the responses and the comments with the staff, Principal and members of the Board of Governors who attended the oral report back.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

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.

Summary of key findings

Children's Achievements Quality of Provision Leadership and management	Very Good Outstanding Outstanding
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4. Children's Achievements

The quality of the children's achievements is very good.

- The children are very well-settled for the time of year and are developing positive attitudes to their learning. They access the resources independently, demonstrating a very good sense of responsibility for the learning environment.
- The children's conversational skills are developing well, especially through the imaginative role-play relating to fairy tales. They develop appropriately their experimental writing skills through the availability of a very good range of writing tools and materials.

5. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery school is outstanding. There are excellent working relationships at all levels in the nursery school. The staff use skilful, sensitive approaches to develop the children's self-esteem and their capability to interact well with their peers. The children's involvement in the ECO award extends their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- The quality of the staff interactions with the children is consistently very good and, at times, is outstanding. They respond skilfully to the children's spontaneous requests and support confidently their explorations through their play activities. The staff use effectively the play opportunities to model the use of appropriate language and to extend the children's thinking skills. The members of staff manage well the open plan arrangement, encompassing both playrooms, which supports the successful development of all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The staff plan systematically to meet the children's individual needs and they modify the planning to meet the children's individual interests. The staff's planning and assessment practices are very good; they evaluate effectively the children's progress and they use this knowledge to inform future actions.
- The nursery school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children access their healthy snacks and they avail of the excellent opportunities for a wide range of outdoor physical play. All of the learning experiences encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

6. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The Principal demonstrates outstanding leadership and fosters a reflective approach in the work of the dedicated and highly skilled staff team. The nursery school's development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement that link to a systematic approach to self-evaluation. The members of staff are in the process of establishing a new development plan and, in light of the new requirements, they are ascertaining appropriately the views of the wider school community regarding the provision.
- The staff report that there are well-developed links between the nursery school and the foundation stage of the local primary school; these links support the smooth transition of the children to year one in the primary school. The 'Parents' Club' provides the parents with good opportunities to be important partners in their children's education.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

CONCLUSION

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.

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