

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Martin's Nursery School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2010

eti

*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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST MARTIN'S NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	25	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support 1 from other professionals for special educational needs	1	3
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	2
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3	6
With English as an additional language	0	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.	40%
Average attendance for the previous year.	95%

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 (qualified)	5	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	4
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	51
Percentage returned	21%
Number of written comments	4

ST MARTIN'S NURSERY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT11 8EJ (113-6106)
INSPECTED: 24 MAY 2010

1. St Martin's Nursery School is situated in the Turf Lodge area of Belfast, it operates two full-time classes of pre-school age children who come mainly from the immediate catchment area.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education and pastoral care provided by this nursery school is outstanding. The nursery has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are all very well motivated and clearly enjoy their learning; they demonstrate very high levels of independence and concentration during their play and other activities. The children engage well in collaborative play and imaginative play; they share, take turns, show care and respect for one another and their environment. They use a range of small tools with dexterity and show confidence in their use of larger equipment. The children's creative ideas are well developed as seen through the many examples of detailed representational art work on display and their confidence in expressing their own ideas using a range of materials. Many of the children show an interest in counting and numbers and in using a range of mathematical ideas and language. The children are curious to explore and investigate natural materials, plants and a range of construction materials.

4. Around 32% of children have been identified with a range of speech and language difficulties; they are making good to excellent progress in their fluency, confidence to express themselves and ability to listen. The children show an extremely high level of interest in a wide range of story, information and personal tailor-made books. The children recall and re-enact stories during role-play and when using a range of resources, including puppets and small world figures. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of songs and rhymes and explore rhythm and beat using a range of musical instruments. Many of the children show an interest in mark making and are beginning to write their names and letters.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The staff prepare a rich and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, using an interesting and often innovative combination of resources. A key strength of the nursery is the consistently excellent quality of the staff's interactions with the children to promote their self-esteem, thinking, language and learning. They set appropriately high expectations of the children and generate a sense of fun and enjoyment as they listen carefully to, and build on, the children's own ideas.

6. The written planning provides a framework for a broad and balanced programme, which guides the day-to-day work of the staff. The staff know the children well and use their assessment information effectively to meet the needs and interests of individual children.

7. Excellent links have been developed with the parents to both promote their own education and to encourage further learning with their children at home through a range of methods including story, maths and science packs. The nursery also maintains very good links with the local primary schools, local partnerships and relevant agencies.

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is outstanding. The strengths include the very strong commitment, evident throughout the nursery, to the care, development and emotional well-being of the children, parents and the staff. In addition, very effective strategies are in place to promote the children's respect for one another, and for their environment both of which contribute to the children's excellent behaviour.

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

10. The nursery gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and lifestyles including, for example, the provision of a fruit break, the children growing their own vegetables and regular opportunities for energetic physical play outdoors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The dedicated and hard-working principal provides excellent leadership and management of the nursery. She is enthusiastic and innovative in her approaches and is always willing to share ideas with other practitioners. The staff and the Board of Governors (governors) all work collaboratively, with clear roles and responsibilities and share their expertise in a very strong team approach; they are all fully committed to the best outcomes for the children and families in the area.

12. 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. The 21% of parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are very pleased with the quality of the overall provision within the nursery; four included additional written comments. Parents recorded their appreciation of the care and dedication of the highly trained teachers, the good opportunities for parents to be fully involved in the life of the school and, the good progress their children are making. The responses from the governors also fully endorsed the work of the Principal and the staff and drew attention to the high value placed on their work within the local community. The staff responses indicated a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the nursery.

13. There is a culture of reflection and self-evaluation in all aspects of the nursery and clear evidence of continuous improvement. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and the actions to be taken and is regularly reviewed.

14. The key strengths of the nursery include:

- the excellent ethos;
- the high quality learning environment both indoors and outdoors;
- the professional skill and expertise of all of the staff in promoting the children's care, development and learning;
- the excellent opportunities to promote learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the children's very good progress in their learning and development; and
- the excellent leadership of the Principal.

15. In the areas inspected, the quality of education and pastoral care provided by this nursery school is outstanding. The nursery school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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