

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Magherafelt Nursery School,  
Magherafelt, County  
Londonderry

Controlled nursery school

Report of an inspection in  
March 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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Department of Education  
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Magherafelt Nursery School is located in the town of Magherafelt. The nursery school operates one full-time and four part-time funded sessions; the children who attend represent a cross-community intake and come from a very wide catchment area. There is an increase in the number of children being identified with additional needs and communication difficulties. At the time of the inspection one teacher had recently taken up a temporary post. Since the last inspection, the school has moved into new accommodation. The school has an International Schools Award from the British Council and an Eco-Schools green Flag Award.

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	26		
Attending part-time		52	52
Under 3 years of age*	0	0	9
Funded by Department of Education	26	52	52
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	#	#	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	11	18	23
With English as an additional language	#	#	9

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	8.46
Average attendance for the previous year.	90.6%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\* On 1 July.

\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

# fewer than 5

### 2. Views of parents and staff

Almost all of the 54 parents who responded indicated a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. They highlighted their appreciation of the excellent support and guidance offered to children with additional needs and their parents, the very high quality learning experiences provided, the professional leadership and caring staff and the progress their children are making. The staff responses were wholly affirmative of the work in the nursery and indicated a strong team commitment to developing and sustaining high quality and innovative early education and care for pre-school children. The few concerns raised have been shared with the leadership and management.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Outstanding
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Outstanding

#### KEY FINDINGS

#### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are experiencing very high levels of learning across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. They are confident, independent learners sustaining self-initiated exploratory, imaginative and creative play for prolonged periods both indoors and outdoors.
- The children are making very good progress in developing their language and communication skills. They use language with increasing skill and confidence to, for example, negotiate and develop their imaginative and collaborative play with other children, explain their thinking, ask questions and describe their feelings and emotions. They pay attention and listen well during group sessions, refer to books during their play and are beginning to experiment with writing in role play and when drawing simple designs for their construction work.
- They use their very good understanding of early mathematical language and concepts, including those associated with number, shape, making comparisons of size and measurement, during their play. They use resources both independently and with the sensitive support of the staff to experiment and solve problems. They build an extensive range of detailed models and constructions using both small and large equipment.
- The children experiment and talk confidently about colour, texture and pattern; they use a wide range of materials, techniques and tools to develop to an advanced level, their own creative and imaginative ideas and art work.
- They respond with increasing expression and empathy, with a good sense of beat, rhyme and rhythm, when engaging in movement, dance, songs and rhymes.
- Children identified with additional needs are making effective progress when using a range of visual strategies and cues with the skilful support of the staff.

#### 6. Quality of provision

- The staff create very attractive, spacious and well resourced learning zones focused on different types of play throughout the nursery environment, including the extensive outdoor play areas. The skilful and purposeful organisation of the accommodation promotes the successful development of high quality learning experiences for all of the children.

- The very high quality of the interactions between the staff and the children promote very effectively the children's communication skills, their early mathematical language development, sustained shared thinking, and high levels of involvement, leading to creative and independent learning.
- The very detailed planning has a clear focus on the learning to be promoted; plans are implemented well by the whole staff team to provide excellent opportunities for learning across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The effective use of assessment information ensures that parents are kept well informed about their child's achievements and progress. The information is linked well to the planning to ensure that every child has a holistic experience within the open plan environment; the programme is child-led and responsive to each child's needs.
- The children who have additional learning needs are identified early and are well supported through detailed individual plans. The skilful use of strategies helps them to integrate and make progress in their learning. There is a close liaison with parents and other professionals to ensure a comprehensive approach to planning their support.
- The high quality of care and welfare is having a very positive impact on the outcomes for the children. There are excellent, respectful relationships between the staff and the children who are confident to work both independently and in co-operation with others.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership of the provision is highly knowledgeable, skilful and innovative in the approach to early years education. The capacity of the staff team is developed to a high level through effective staff development which focuses clearly on learning and teaching, led by the principal; this is purposefully informed by local, national and international practice in early years.
- There is a strong collegial approach among the staff team who take responsibility very effectively within each learning zone and ensure that every child is encouraged to learn and develop skills within each of the areas in the nursery.
- There is a well-embedded cycle of monitoring and evaluation at all levels leading to continuous improvement in all aspects of the provision and high level outcomes for the children. The school development plan and associated action plans are well focused on raising standards and striving for excellence.
- Parents are provided with a wide range of detailed information about the work of the nursery and about their child's achievements and progress. Their views and contributions to the work of the nursery are valued. The principal skilfully facilitates the Getting Ready to Learn programme for small groups of parents to encourage them to be involved in their child's learning and development. The communication with other schools contributes to effective transition arrangements for the children.

- The governors contribute a wide range of valuable skills and experience; they are well informed about the work of the nursery and the learning being developed and have a good understanding of their role.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **8. Overall effectiveness**

Magherafelt Nursery School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners.

The ETI will monitor how the nursery school sustains improvement.

## APPENDIX A

### Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
9:00-1:30	9:00-11:30	12:30-3:00

### Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3	1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	4	0
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	3	1

Number of: *	
Students	3

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\* Total placements since September of current year

### Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements, progression and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management, including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.



### Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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%

### Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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