

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Railway Street Nursery School,
Armagh City

Controlled nursery school

Report of an Inspection in
February 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Railway Street Nursery School is a single unit nursery located close to the centre of Armagh City. The facilities, both indoors and outdoors, are presented to a very high standard. The children attending the nursery school come from a range of different communities and backgrounds.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	28
Under 3 years of age*	7
Funded by Department of Education	28
With statement of special educational needs	#
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#
With English as an additional language	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	16
Average attendance for the previous year.	88.95%
Number of days open in previous school year	180

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

A minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were very positive and the additional written comments were highly complementary about all aspects of the life and work of the nursery. In particular, the parents appreciate the caring and child-centred approach of the staff, the wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences provided for the children, the effective links established with the parents and the commitment of the staff to the care and well-being of the children.

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

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Overall, for the time of year, the children are attaining very high standards across the six areas of the preschool curriculum. The children have developed very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning. They are confident in choosing activities and resources, display high levels of independence during snack and lunch routines and show respect for their peers, the staff and their environment. Almost all of the children engage in purposeful and sustained play throughout the session and persevere with tasks.
- The children enjoy thoroughly the stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments and spend lengthy periods exploring and investigating the very well presented activities, resources and play areas. The children engage readily with the staff and can talk confidently about their play and experiences and ask questions to seek clarification. They enjoy stories and participate well in a wide range of songs and rhymes.
- The children use independently, the wide range of creative materials to make detailed representations of the world as they see it. They show an interest in, and appreciation of, the planned cultural themes and topics that represent the diversity of the group of children attending the nursery. They are confident to experiment and develop their own ideas which are celebrated by the staff and displayed attractively throughout the nursery.
- The children are developing very well their fine and gross motor skills through the excellent variety of experiences provided both indoors and outdoors.
- The children who require support with aspects of their learning respond very well to the strategies deployed and targets set by the staff and are making very good progress in line with their ability.

6. Quality of provision

- The learning environment is richly resourced to provide an excellent range of materials and experiences which meet very well the needs of the children. The nursery is very attractively presented and enhanced by interest areas, relevant photographs and displays of the children's own work. The easy access the children have to materials promotes their independence very well. The outdoor area is thoughtfully planned to ensure a wide and rich range of learning across the curriculum with particularly good opportunities for children to explore, learn about and care for the world around them.

- The staff have a very good shared understanding of the learning to be promoted through the play and the daily routines. They are highly skilled in supporting the children to progress in their learning and development, listen carefully to the children, model language and use appropriate questioning to extend their thinking. They provide high quality support for the children identified with additional learning needs.
- The written planning guides the staff very well in their work with the children and it informs an extensive range of experiences for the children which progress appropriately through the year. The staff know the children very well and use the information gained through their interactions with, and observations of the children, to inform future learning and to meet their individual needs. Appropriate procedures are in place to inform the parents about their child's progress and development. The wide range of external visits and visitors to the pre-school enhances further the children's learning experiences.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes.
- The daily programme includes a healthy snack and lunch, cooked on site, for the children and an appropriate period for energetic physical play. These routines promote very well the children's independence, social skills and language development.

7. Leadership and management

- The outstanding leadership and management of the nursery promotes excellent teamwork and a shared vision for providing high quality care and education.
- The board of governors are fully aware of their responsibility as a governing body and support the staff very well in their work. Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of leadership and management evaluated.
- The nursery's approach to development planning and self-evaluation is reflective and based on a culture of continuous improvement in the best interest of the children and ongoing evaluation of all aspects the work of the nursery.
- The nursery has established excellent links with parents, relevant agencies and the main feeder primary schools for the benefit of the children. Information about the children's progress and development is gathered regularly and is shared at key times throughout the year with the parents. Appropriate information is passed to the feeder primary schools to aid transition.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

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

The ETI will monitor how the nursery school sustains improvement.

Health and safety

1. The nursery school is situated on a very busy bend in the road. The speed of the traffic at this point in the road presents a risk to the children while walking to and from the nursery. The school should explore the possibility of speed ramps being provided at this point in the road.

Information on sessions and staff

Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
9.00-1.30		

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	1	
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1	

Number of: *	
Students	1

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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