

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Academy Nursery School,
Londonderry

Controlled nursery school

Report of an Inspection in
March 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

The Academy Nursery School is located in the Rosemount area of Londonderry and offers a combination of full-time and part-time places for 72 children. The children attending the nursery school come from the local and wider area.

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	25		
Attending part-time		26	26
Under 3 years of age*			13
Funded by Department of Education (DE)	26	26	26
With statement of special educational needs			
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	*	*
At CoP stages 3 or 4**			
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	10	*	12
With English as an additional language	0	*	*
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school			

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	89.7
Average attendance for the previous year.	89.4%
Number of days open in previous school year	186

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

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A majority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Almost all of the responses were positive and the additional written comments were complementary about the work of the nursery. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring approachable staff, the safe environment and positive learning experiences provided for 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	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children show good levels of independence and are familiar with the daily routines of the nursery. They approach the staff and other children with ease, engage in concentrated and purposeful play and can talk about their ideas, feelings and personal experiences.
- Almost all of the children can follow simple instructions and listen attentively when involved in group activities. The staff place much emphasis on the development of the children's language and literacy and the children are responding very positively; they have a keen interest in story and reference books and join in enthusiastically in specific language games and sessions. The children's art and other representational work are of a good standard and much is displayed prominently around the nursery. In imaginative role play, the children act out character roles confidently and use the available resources appropriately. The majority of the children show good mathematical awareness such as one-to-one correspondence, recognition of shape and an ability to count in order. The children have access to a range of writing materials and some are beginning to attempt to write letters in their name. They have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes and, on occasions, incorporate these into their play.
- In the full-time session the large number of adults present, including students, restricts the children's free play and, on occasions, creates an over-reliance by the children on the adults.
- The children with specific needs are identified early and appropriate steps are taken to address these. The evidence available in the part-time sessions indicates that the children are responding positively to the strategies and interventions used by the staff. There is limited evidence that this is substantiated in the full-time session.

6. Quality of provision

- During the inspection, too often, the management of the full-time session was poor and the children quickly became disengaged. The management of the group story in the full-time session did not develop the children's attention and listening skills. The presence of too many adults in the full-time session impacts negatively on the quality of play; resulting either in constant questioning or discussion about what the children are doing. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children ranged from satisfactory to very good and, in the best practice, the staff responded quickly and appropriately to the children's needs and interests, joined readily in their play and built upon their responses.

- In the full-time session, the lack of historical or current planning and systematic assessment is an important area for improvement. In the part-time sessions the written planning guides appropriately the staff in their work. In these sessions, the staff know the children well and use appropriate methods to gather evidence about their progress and development. This information informs the planning and is shared with the parents throughout the year.
- The staff provide an interesting and varied programme for the children throughout the year. The provision includes: trips to places of educational interest; visitors to the nursery setting and more specialised activities provided by outside agencies.
- The use of the available space in the nursery is not maximised to support learning and teaching. The nursery is, however, very attractively presented and well-resourced. The daily timetable is organised to provide a range of indoor and outdoor activities and routines and includes appropriate periods of free play. Aspects of the outdoor provision are currently being reviewed to develop the children's play and provide more breadth, variety and challenge in the play experiences available to them.
- The children in the nursery who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and programmes are designed appropriately to address individual need.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the nursery's approach to the care and welfare of the children, through its leadership, planning for learning and teaching, and methods of assessment and record keeping, does not meet effectively the individual needs of all of the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the nursery requires urgent improvement. The staff are currently not afforded the appropriate guidance and expertise required to ensure consistently high quality care and education across the nursery school.
- There is a need to improve the leadership of the nursery to ensure consistency of approach to learning and teaching across the nursery and build on, and disseminate, the good practice that already exists in the part-time sessions.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that the board of governors are not sufficiently proactive in overseeing the aspects of leadership and management evaluated. There is a need to exercise fully their challenge function to ensure the highest standards of pre-school education are provided for all the children.
- The nursery's school development plan is in the final stage of a three year cycle. The process of self-evaluation is currently underdeveloped and lacks sufficient reflection and rigour to support ongoing evaluation of all aspects the work of the nursery and a culture of continuous improvement in the best interest of the children.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory. Although the children are working in a safe and secure environment the nursery needs to ensure that all the written documentation and evidence to support the safeguarding procedures in the nursery are accurate and complete.
- The nursery has established very good 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 not gathered regularly, supported by appropriate evidence, consistently across the whole nursery school. The better practice needs to be implemented across the whole school. Information is shared with the parents and passed to the feeder primary schools to aid transition.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

The Academy Nursery School needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the quality of the provision in the full-time session, in particular, the classroom management and the methods of planning for learning and record keeping and assessment; and
- to review the leadership and management of the nursery at all levels and ensure the highest possible standards of care and education are provided for all the children.

The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery's progress in addressing the area for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

The ETI will also return to the nursery within six weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues.

Information on sessions and staff**Duration of sessions**

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours

Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	1	1
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	1	1
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	1	1
New appointments within the previous 12 months		

Number of: *	
Students	7
Trainees	

Source: data provided by the setting.

* Total placements since September of current year

Inspection methodology 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; 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 the 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.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF ACADEMY NURSERY SCHOOL IN MARCH 2017

SAFEGUARDING

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the district inspector returned to Academy Nursery School on 8 May 2017 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on the 20 March 2017; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. However the organisation needs:

- in light of staffing arrangements on the day of the follow-up visit, to ensure acting up and temporary appointment arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are in place as required; and
- to ensure that the educational experiences contribute fully to the care and welfare, and safeguarding of the children.

During the interim period, the school had received support from the Child Protection Support Service of the Education Authority.

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