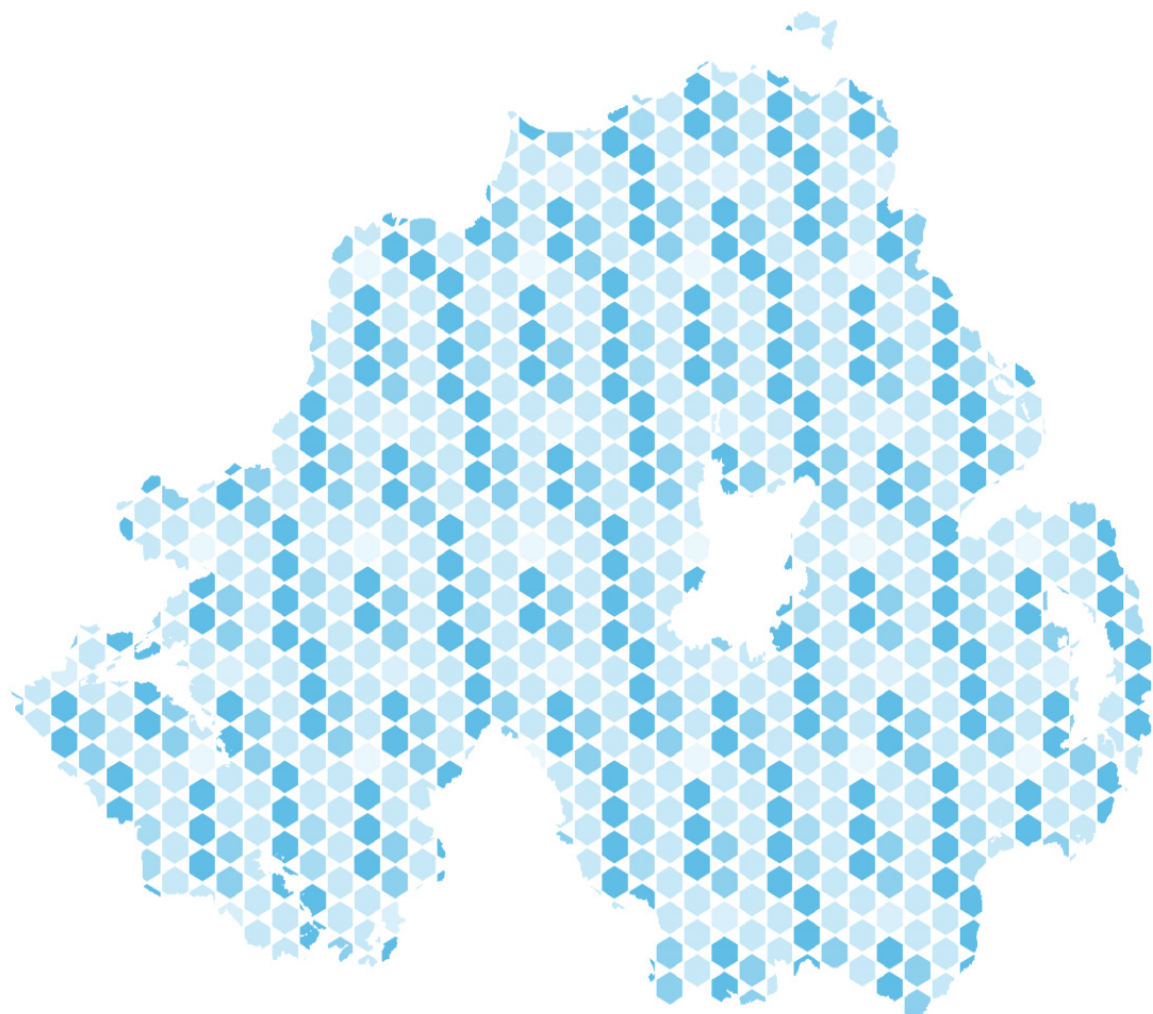


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballykelly Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Co Londonderry

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

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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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Ballykelly Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 11/10/2010**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 201-2298** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	58	48	34	37	35
Enrolments					
Primary	373	327	274	283	241
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	42	26	26	26	26
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	0	0	0	0	0

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection.
 For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

The calculations at C and D should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year
 (expressed as a percentage): 94.5 **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 12.6 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 21.9
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 26
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- | | |
|---|-------|
| i. Clerical support: | 36 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 45 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 102.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.66
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 22
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 25.8
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 69.49 **Mathematics** 69.49

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ballykelly Primary School is situated within the village of Ballykelly, County Londonderry. Most of the children come from the immediate local area. The enrolment has shown a marked decline over the past five years and currently stands at 241. Since the time of the last inspection in 2001 the school population has halved. This decline is due largely to the loss of the families of service personnel who are no longer stationed locally. Approximately 26% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 22% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

The nursery unit is situated in the grounds of the school and offers 26 full-time places. The teacher-in-charge is beginning her second year in the unit.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection were evaluated.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of the children from year 6.

One hundred and forty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents; approximately 30% of these were returned to Inspection Services Branch. Twenty-one returns contained additional written comments. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular the parents value the support for children with special educational needs, the caring and dedicated staff and the wide range of after-school activities made available for the children and parents.

In the nursery, 58% of the parents responded to the questionnaires and four made additional written comments. The responses indicate that the parents regard the nursery highly and appreciate the way in which the staff support the children as they settle in and involve the parents in the life and work of the unit.

Twelve teachers and six support staff completed the confidential online questionnaire with three teachers and two support staff providing additional written comments. Their responses indicated satisfaction with most aspects of the school's work, highlighting in particular the caring and supportive ethos of the school. A minority of the teaching staff identified issues relating to collegial decision-making and staff welfare within the school.

The governors spoke positively about the school's strong pastoral ethos including the support for the children with additional learning needs, the wide range of after-school activities and the valuable work of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in supporting the work of the school. They identified the need to raise further the standards achieved by the children by the end of key stage (KS) 2.

In discussions held with the year 6 children, they talked enthusiastically and warmly about their school. In particular, they valued the caring and approachable Principal, the support provided by the teachers, the variety in the curriculum, and the opportunities available to sing in the school choir, both within the local community and in the 'Young Voices' regional concert. They also indicated strongly that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires and discussions.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school and the nursery unit is very good. The strengths include: the cognisance taken of the individual needs of the children; the welcoming, inclusive and supportive ethos within most of the classrooms; the wide ranging extended schools activities supported well by the children and the parents; the effective whole-school merit system; the very well-behaved and courteous children; and the well-planned collaborative assemblies which promote the children's personal and social development.

1.5 SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity for example, through the fruit break scheme, the provision of popular healthy school meals and a wide range of sporting and physical fitness opportunities, all of which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school and the nursery unit have developed very good communication and links with the parents; there are regular opportunities for the parents to consult with the teachers both formally and informally. There is an active parent support group which provides valued additional resources, for example, the recent purchase of a new reading scheme and ICT hardware both of which extend the learning and teaching opportunities for the children. Within the foundation stage (FS) and nursery unit a monthly newsletter is available for the parents; its key focus is to provide helpful guidance on numeracy and literacy strategies which can be used to support the children in their learning at home. A series of valuable after-school classes have been organised for the parents, mostly through Extended Schools

provision, including a well-supported programme on the development of early learning, numeracy and writing skills. A successful development of this programme is the accreditation which is available to the parents. A well established Linking Learning project is in operation between the school and a local post-primary school; this arrangement supports well the year 7 children's transition to the next stage of their education.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children display a good attitude to learning. They demonstrate very good personal and inter-personal skills; they engage eagerly with the activities set and work well both individually and with their peers. When given the opportunities, they are keen to talk about their learning and explain their thinking. In the FS the children learn through a wide range of very well planned interactions and play-based activities. They demonstrate high levels of independence and achieve suitably high standards.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is consistently below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the level of attainment in English and mathematics is below the average. While the majority of the children make satisfactory progress the teachers are monitoring closely the progress of a significant minority of the children who are underachieving. The inspection findings confirm that this is an important area for development. In developing further this work the teachers need to identify tailored learning programmes for all of these children in order to raise the standards they achieve in literacy and numeracy.

In 2010, approximately half of the children on the special educational needs (SEN) register achieved the expected levels in numeracy and literacy at the end of KS1 and KS2, respectively. Overall, most of these children make good progress, particularly in literacy.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality of the provision for English and literacy is satisfactory.

In the FS the children's talking and listening skills are developed effectively through play-based learning and shared reading sessions. They work well in pairs and groups, ask imaginative questions and can express their thoughts and ideas confidently. In KS1 and KS2 the children engage well in class discussions and their responses are valued well by the teachers. In a significant minority of the lessons, however, the children's talking and listening experiences were limited by over-direction and less effective questioning from the teachers.

In the FS the children are able to recognise letter names and sounds. They enjoy the guided reading activities, are able to match sentences to pictures and can retell stories using a variety of strategies, including story maps. The teachers make innovative use of ICT to support the children's reading; the children in year 2 add voice-overs to a story and can read confidently for an audience. A wide range of Story Sacks has been created with the support of parents to help promote the children's language development and enjoyment of books at home. In KS1 and KS2 the children have regular opportunities to develop their reading skills through guided, shared and independent reading sessions. The children read with increasing fluency and expression and use appropriate strategies to help them overcome

unfamiliar words. They talk enthusiastically about their reading. The majority of the children make progress in reading in line with their age and abilities; for those children with difficulties withdrawal and outreach support is available. To raise further the standards of reading achieved by all the children, the teachers need to use a wider range of well focused and challenging activities to consolidate and extend the children's reading skills.

In the FS, teachers use a variety of creative strategies to promote the children's emergent writing. The children are able to write their own sentences with capital letters and full stops. In KS1 the children are able to plan and write simple factual recounts, reports, diaries and letters. They use their phonics skills to sound out and spell unfamiliar words and by the end of KS1 they can write independently and with increasing accuracy. There is a wide variation in the quality of the children's hand writing and general presentation which the teachers need to address. In KS2 the children write for a range of purposes, including planning, reporting, note-making and biographical. The teachers need to provide the children with a wider range of opportunities for independent and extended writing across the curriculum. Information and communication technology is used effectively throughout the school to encourage the children to research, edit and present their work. The majority of the children achieve standards in writing that are in line with their ability. In order to improve these standards further, the whole staff need to take a more systematic and collegial approach to the monitoring and moderation of the children's written work to ensure appropriate progression throughout the school.

The literacy co-ordinator is committed to improving the provision for literacy and has made a good start to promoting a more structured approach to reading and writing throughout the school. An additional commercial reading scheme has been introduced recently and has been well received by both the teachers and the children. The co-ordinator is currently holding writing workshops for the parents of KS2 children and has raised successfully the profile of writing through the publication of a book of stories and poems celebrating the work of children from years 2 to 7. The co-ordinator has identified appropriately the need to develop a whole school scheme of work to guide more accurately the teachers' medium and short term planning and enable greater continuity and progression in talking and listening, reading and writing throughout the school. The inspection endorses this as a priority for development.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

The programme for mathematics provides the children with a wide range of experiences in number, shape and space, measures and data-handling. In the FS the children have very good opportunities to develop mathematical language and ideas through play-based learning. They benefit from the frequent and appropriate use of practical materials which consolidate very effectively their mathematical learning. In KS1 and KS2 the teachers continue to make use of a range of practical equipment to develop the children's understanding of important concepts such as place value, decimals and fractions. In the majority of the lessons observed the pace was good, the teachers had high expectations for the children's mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills, and the children worked conscientiously to meet these expectations. In a significant minority of the classes, particularly at KS2, a slow pace undermined more effective learning and the activities did not engage or challenge the children sufficiently. A scheme of work for mental mathematics enables the teachers to plan for, and develop, effective progression of the children's mental mathematics strategies. The very good practice observed in the majority of classes, where the children were frequently encouraged to explain the mathematical reasoning behind their answers, needs to be applied more consistently across the school.

The use of mathematics in a range of different contexts across the curriculum is well embedded throughout the school. For example, as part of a World Around Us project the children in year 3 used Carroll and Venn diagrams to explore the differences in eye colour in their class. In years 6 and 7 the children used their knowledge of symmetry to create patterns in art. The children need to be given greater opportunities to write about their mathematics, particularly in response to problem-solving and investigative activities. The teachers make effective use of a range of ICT, including interactive games, websites and programmable devices to support learning and teaching in mathematics.

The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the development of mathematics within the school. She is an excellent role-model for good practice and supports effectively her colleagues in implementing the agreed strategies. She organises a number of mathematical clubs to further enhance the children's enjoyment and understanding of mathematics, and a 'Parents In Numeracy' programme which encourages parents to become more productively involved in their children's learning. The co-ordinator recognises the need to develop further the good start she has made in monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the planning, learning and teaching of mathematics across the school. The school is currently revising the scheme of work for numeracy; this process, and the resulting documentation, is providing useful guidance to class teachers to aid medium and short term planning and ensuring continuity and progression in the children's learning. The numeracy action plans need to place greater emphasis on improving the standards in numeracy attained by the children.

The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are satisfactory. During the inspection the highest attaining children in year 4 demonstrated their ability to think mathematically across all areas of the numeracy programme and to talk with confidence about their experiences. In year 7, while the highest attaining children demonstrated their knowledge of important ideas and concepts, for example, place value and measures, they were unsure of the most effective mental mathematics strategies and were slow to demonstrate flexibility in their mathematical thinking.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The overall quality of the teachers' medium term planning to support the teaching and learning is good. The teachers know the children well. In the best practice, they plan appropriately to meet the needs of all the children and they are clear about what they want the children to learn, with sharply focused learning outcomes guiding the classroom practice. Throughout the school, there is very good ongoing evaluation of the planning; teachers are reflecting on their practice and annotating their planning in order to improve their teaching and the children's learning. The school has appropriately identified planning as an area for development.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; almost three-quarters of the lessons were good or better and approximately one-quarter had significant areas for improvement. In the most effective practice: the lessons are well planned and imaginatively resourced, promoting high levels of challenge, engagement and enjoyment for the children; the teachers use challenging questions and skilful interactions to encourage extended responses; they discuss the learning intentions and success criteria with the children and use these as a focus for consolidation; and the work is matched well to the needs of all the children. In the less effective practice, there is a lack of focus on the

intended learning outcomes for the children, the lessons are over-directed by the teacher and lack the necessary pace and challenge to fully extend the children, particularly the more able. Overall, there is a need to improve the quality of provision, particularly at KS2, to build on the highly effective practice in years 1 and 2 of the FS. The senior management needs to share and disseminate more systematically across the school the key aspects of the very good and outstanding practice observed during the inspection in order to ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences for the children as they progress through the key stages.

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified appropriately at an early stage through the teachers' observations, diagnostic tests and the analysis of standardised assessment data. The individual education plan (IEP) targets are specific, monitored closely, reviewed regularly and inform classroom practice. The current provision is through in-class, withdrawal and peripatetic support. Recently, the withdrawal provision has been extended appropriately to include support for numeracy. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), supported ably by the learning support assistant, provides the withdrawal sessions in a supportive, enthusiastic and nurturing atmosphere; the children respond well to this support and are gaining in confidence and self-esteem.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

There are appropriate procedures and records in place for keeping the parents informed about their children's learning which include two formal parent-teacher consultations and a written report at the end of the school year, detailing individual children's progress across the curriculum.

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and supportively and, in the best practice, provide the children with helpful comments on how their learning can be improved. In the FS, there is effective use of baseline assessment data, learning intentions and success criteria to inform individual targets for the children's attainment and self-improvement. This good practice needs to be developed consistently throughout the school.

The staff monitor the children's progress regularly and systematically. The school uses a suitable range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's levels of achievement in English and mathematics. There is a need to make more effective use of this data to inform whole-school priorities for improvement and to raise further the standards in literacy and numeracy which the children attain.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The Principal has been in post for the last 18 years. He is committed to the well-being of the children and promotes in them a sense of their own worth and a respect for others. He has recently returned to school following a lengthy period of secondment during which time the Vice-principal took on the role of acting-Principal. During this time the co-ordinators provided effective leadership within their curricular and pastoral areas, accessing appropriate staff development and making a good start to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning. The special needs provision is guided very effectively by the SENCO. He supports the class teachers in developing appropriate IEPs, in consultation with the children, the parents and, when appropriate, external agencies. He has identified appropriate areas for further development and coordinates effectively staff development opportunities. In leading the school, senior management now needs to take a more strategic approach in the identification of key priorities and the planning for whole school improvement.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school development plan (SDP) is mostly compliant with the Department of Education School Development Plan Regulations/Schedule 2005/19. There is a need to add a clear and succinct assessment of the children's progress and standards of attainment. Overall, there is insufficient emphasis placed on improving the standards in literacy and numeracy which the children attain. The action plans are too general to guide the monitoring of the implementation of the targets and do not identify adequately the strategies through which these targets will be realised.

The nursery unit's planned programme offers satisfactory opportunities for learning across most areas of the curriculum. The children need to be provided with more opportunities to develop their creativity and to observe the world around them. The school has appropriately, identified the development of outdoor play as a priority in the school development plan.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

There are deficiencies in the fabric of the school building, however, effective use is made of the available accommodation to support teaching and learning. The standard of caretaking is very good.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors support the staff well in raising the profile of the school and maintaining effective links with the parents and the local community.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the exemplary behaviour of the children and their enthusiasm and interest in their work;
- the quality of teaching which was good or better in almost three-quarters of the lessons observed;
- the outstanding quality of the provision in the FS at years 1 and 2;
- the very good quality of the pastoral care provision;
- the very good quality of the provision for SEN including, the highly effective leadership provided by the SENCO; and
- the very wide range of after-school activities provided for the children and parents and the valuable links established with other schools and the wider community.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to;

- develop a more systematic and collegial approach to the dissemination of the key aspects of the best practice within the school to ensure that the children are provided with consistently high-quality learning experiences; and

- develop further the processes for self-evaluation and improvement to raise further the standards the children attain in literacy and numeracy.

5.3 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The main strengths within the nursery unit's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:

- the nursery unit has a welcoming atmosphere and the staff treat the children with care and respect. During the inspection, there were many examples when the staff provided the children with sustained support during play, particularly in the indoor and outdoor book areas and during water play;
- the children engage in early mark making and can use mathematical language appropriately during play activities. They enjoy listening to and interacting with the stories and rhymes during story time and throughout the play session;
- the well-established nursery routines which are used effectively to promote the children's independence. The children are able to self register, set their place for the lunch routine and label their paintings using symbols; and
- the well-developed communication links with the parents which include a monthly newsletter containing curriculum information, a toy lending scheme and useful guidance on the nursery dinner routine. This information helps the parents to understand the nursery routines and to support their children at home.

6.2 The inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- the senior management team needs to monitor and evaluate more closely the nursery provision and to establish curricular links between the foundation stage and the nursery unit;
- the nursery staff need to develop further the methods for planning the programme in order to focus on the learning outcomes for the children and to guide the staff more effectively in their interactions with the children; and
- the development of all areas of the pre-school curriculum to enhance the quality of provision for all the children.

6.3 In most of the areas inspected the quality of the education provided in this nursery unit is satisfactory. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery unit's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYKELLY PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	0%
Average attendance for the previous year.	94.5%

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	1	0
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	1	0

Number of: ****	
Students	0
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	57.7%
Number of written comments	4

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