

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Carr Primary School,
Carrduff

Report of an Inspection
in November 2011



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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: Carr Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 14/11/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-1584** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	7	9	8	6	8
Enrolments					
Primary	64	48	40	37	39
Reception	4	5	4	8	8
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
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): 89.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register:

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 11.75 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 11
- iv. Class Size (Range): 10 to 16
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|
| i. Clerical support: | | 15 | |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | 10 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | 25 | |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.12%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 17.02%
- viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: 8
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 14.89%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):
- | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | English | Mathematics | Irish |
| | 0% | 0% | N/A |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Carr Primary School is situated in a pleasant rural site two miles west of Carryduff. The majority of the children travel to school by car. The enrolment of the school has fluctuated over the past three years and currently stands at 39 children. In the foundation stage (FS) class there are an additional eight children below statutory school age (Reception) for whom the school receives funding from the Department of Education (DE). The children are taught in composite classes consisting of two or three year groups, three of the classes include children at two different key stages.

The school reports that approximately 15% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 17% of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

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 and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and the children from year 6.

Almost 36% of parental questionnaires were returned to the Inspection Services Branch and nine contained additional written comments. Almost all of the comments were highly positive of the school drawing attention to the friendly, family atmosphere that permeates the school and the support and approachability of the Principal and staff.

Three of the teaching staff and four members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaires. Two teachers and two of the support staff supplied additional comments all of which were very positive in particular about the team spirit that exists among the staff and their sense of feeling valued.

Two representatives of the governors spoke very positively about the happy, inclusive ethos of the school and signalled their appreciation of the work of the school and the commitment of the Principal and staff to the children.

The children in year 6 spoke about the friendly atmosphere in the school and appreciated afterschool activities such as football and dodgeball. They are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments was shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is a caring ethos that supports the personal and social development of the children. The children are friendly and almost all displayed good behaviour during the inspection. The reward systems in place, for example 'Student of the Week' and 'Traffic Lights,' help to promote self esteem and positive behaviour. Opportunities such as the Eco Council and comment boxes enable the children to express their ideas and suggestions about the life and work of the school. The extra-curricular programme which includes sport, drama and dance activities and the educational visits and visitors to the school help enrich the children's experience further. The pastoral care co-ordinator has recognised the need to update aspects of some of the related documents.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the DE.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity. This is highlighted in initiatives such as healthy breaks and the regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play and sports, including the development of Fundamental Movement and Skills, which are available to children.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The children benefit from the links within the community and with the local primary and post-primary schools. The Parent Teacher Association has helped raise considerable funds to set up an outdoor play resource area and purchase equipment such as Interactive White Boards.

There are appropriate procedures for keeping the parents well informed about their children's progress, for example, a written report, and three formal parent-teacher consultations. The annual written report for parents provides the necessary information about their children's progress and the standards they reach.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are generally motivated to learn; they settle well to their work demonstrating good organisational skills, levels of independence and engagement in their learning.

The children who receive additional support with their learning make good progress. These include children with learning difficulties in literacy and a small number who have special educational needs of a behavioural nature.

In the absence of key stage* (KS) 2 data for last year, an analysis of the assessment data for the previous two years shows that the school's performance is well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Similarly, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are well above the average when compared with schools in the same free schools meals category.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision for English and literacy is good.

The Literacy co-ordinator has made a good start to using the school's external and internal performance data to set appropriate targets for literacy across the school. She has worked effectively with the Principal to introduce appropriate targets and action plans; she needs to continue to monitor and evaluate closely the impact on learning and teaching. The school has also identified appropriately the need to review the Literacy Policy on an annual basis.

Across key stages almost all of the children have very good oral communication skills and speak confidently to peers, teachers and other adults.

A major focus in literacy this year has been the implementation of a new phonics programme across all classes. The teachers have worked hard to create interesting and challenging phonic activities for children to complete both at home and in school.

The majority of the children achieve good standards in reading. The children are taught to read systematically through the use of commercial reading schemes which are enhanced by a wide range of appropriate support materials such as novels, 'big books' and reference materials. They enjoy reading and are developing a good range of appropriate strategies to help them interpret unfamiliar text. Across the year groups the children benefit from a range of approaches to reading, including shared, modelled and guided reading. During the inspection, groups of children from years 4 and 7 read with fluency and understanding. Reading is promoted positively in the school through World Book Day events, timetabled silent reading time and the annual book fair. The school has implemented a 'Reading Partnership' programme to provide support for those children identified as needing additional help. All of the children receiving the support have made progress.

The standards attained by the children in writing are good. In the FS, the children become familiar with different forms of print and experiment with informal mark making. The children's letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure are developed through shared writing activities. Across the key stages the children experience a wide variety of writing activities across a range of genres. ICT is used effectively to support the children's learning; in KS2, the children were using the internet for independent research purposes and selection of information. The school has focused on improving the children's hand writing skills and this is appropriate as the presentation in the children's books is variable.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision in mathematics and numeracy is good.

The numeracy co-ordinator provides effective guidance for the teachers and has devised an action plan which has identified appropriate targets and is informed by the staff's analysis of the internal and external performance data of the children's attainments.

* The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

In the FS classes, the children enjoyed the mathematics lessons; they were encouraged to think mathematically and to share their understanding with their peers. The work was suitably differentiated and through a range of practical investigative activities, the children were developing their mathematical knowledge and understanding across number, shape and measures. Some of the mathematical activities available to the reception children were too structured and overly directed by the staff at times.

As they progress in KS1 and KS2, the children's knowledge and skills develop progressively through a range of effective teaching approaches, such as practical activities, written work and discussion sessions. The children have regular opportunities to engage in a range of problem-solving and investigative mathematics. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support teaching and learning, with teachers making good use of interactive whiteboards, computer programmes and websites to support learning and teaching in mathematics.

By year 7, the children attain a good mathematical understanding, including calculating, estimating and measuring, and knowledge of the properties of a variety of two-dimensional (2-D) and 3-D shapes.

The teachers assess regularly the children's mathematical progress; almost all of the children attain standards that are in line with their ability. Mental mathematics is well integrated across the school and the children are encouraged to use a range of strategies when posed with a mathematical problem; most of the children demonstrate good flexibility in their mathematical thinking and can talk confidently about their learning. The emphasis on the development of mathematical language is a feature in all classes throughout the school. The presentation and quality of work in the children's books is variable. In the best practice the work is titled, dated and neatly laid out. In the less effective practice the work is untidy and there is incorrect spelling of key mathematical language.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The planning across the curriculum provides an effective framework for progression and helps to ensure coherence in the children's learning. The teachers evaluate their planning regularly. In the best practice, these evaluations are focused on the needs of groups and individuals within the class and are used effectively to inform future planning to meet the requirements of all the children. The teachers need to develop aspects of the short-term planning to meet more effectively the challenges arising from the composite nature of the classes and avoid missed opportunities to promote learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good with most of the lessons being good or very good.

In the most effective practice, there was a clear sharing of learning intentions and success criteria and the lessons were well paced and purposeful. Through effective questioning, the teachers challenged the children's thinking, deepened their understanding of key concepts and promoted the development of their oral literacy. Appropriate differentiation was also in evidence and the learning was often linked to the children's experiences.

In the less effective practice observed, the learning intentions were unclear or not shared with the children, there was a lack of pace and on a few occasions there were opportunities missed to progress the learning.

The quality of the reception provision is satisfactory. The staff needs to review the provision for the underage children (reception) to ensure it reflects fully a broad and balanced pre-school programme and does not impact adversely on the year one provision.

3.2 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is given a high priority by the school and the quality of the provision is good.

The teachers, with the support of the Principal, who has taken on the role of special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), identify early those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning through observations of the children in class, the use of standardised tests and the analysis of assessment data. The current provision is through in-class support where the teachers provide differentiated work and spend appropriate time with individuals.

An analysis of the available data demonstrates that the children make good progress in line with the individual education plan (EP's) targets and, on occasion, make sufficient progress to be removed from the SEN register.

The SENCO oversees the EP's for the children with special educational needs. Almost all of the EP's focus on Literacy or behaviour, the teachers need to ensure that the EP targets reflect the overall needs of each child and include where appropriate reference to numeracy.

The SENCO provides appropriate guidance for the staff and maintains good links with the parents and a range of support agencies.

3.4 ASSESSMENT

The Principal has collated and analysed very effectively a wide range of performance data including analysis of standardised tests and DE bench-marking information which informs whole school target setting. The teachers are increasingly using the analysis of data to inform the teaching and learning.

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly. The marking is at its most effective when the teachers provide detailed written feedback, give appropriate praise for good work and allow the children to correct any mistakes. This good practice needs to be more consistent across the school. The teachers have made a good start to guiding and encouraging the children to engage in peer-evaluation and self-evaluation of their learning.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post since 2008; in addition to her leadership role she has a teaching responsibility five days each week. She demonstrates very good leadership and, with the support and commitment of her staff, has introduced a number of important

curriculum changes, including a greater emphasis on teacher self-evaluation. Through action planning and target setting, she is gaining an increasingly robust strategic overview of the life and work of the school. She fosters an inclusive whole-school ethos and is strongly supportive of the welfare of all of the staff and the children.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The SDP is compliant with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors ensure that all aspects of the life and work of the school are kept under review. They have worked closely with the Principal to significantly reduce the school deficit that the Principal inherited.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The school building and surrounding grounds are maintained to a high standard and provide a pleasant working environment for the staff and children.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care provided for the children;
- the good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was good or better;
- the very good leadership of the Principal who is well supported by her hard-working staff;
- the effective use of performance data to set whole school targets and inform learning and teaching; and
- the developing culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement within the school.

5.2 The area for improvement is the need:

- to review the provision for the underage children (reception) to ensure it reflects fully a broad and balanced pre-school programme and does not impact adversely on the year one class.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- At the time of the inspection the Principal drew attention to concerns regarding an area of external fencing. This matter is currently under review with the relevant Education and Library Board.

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