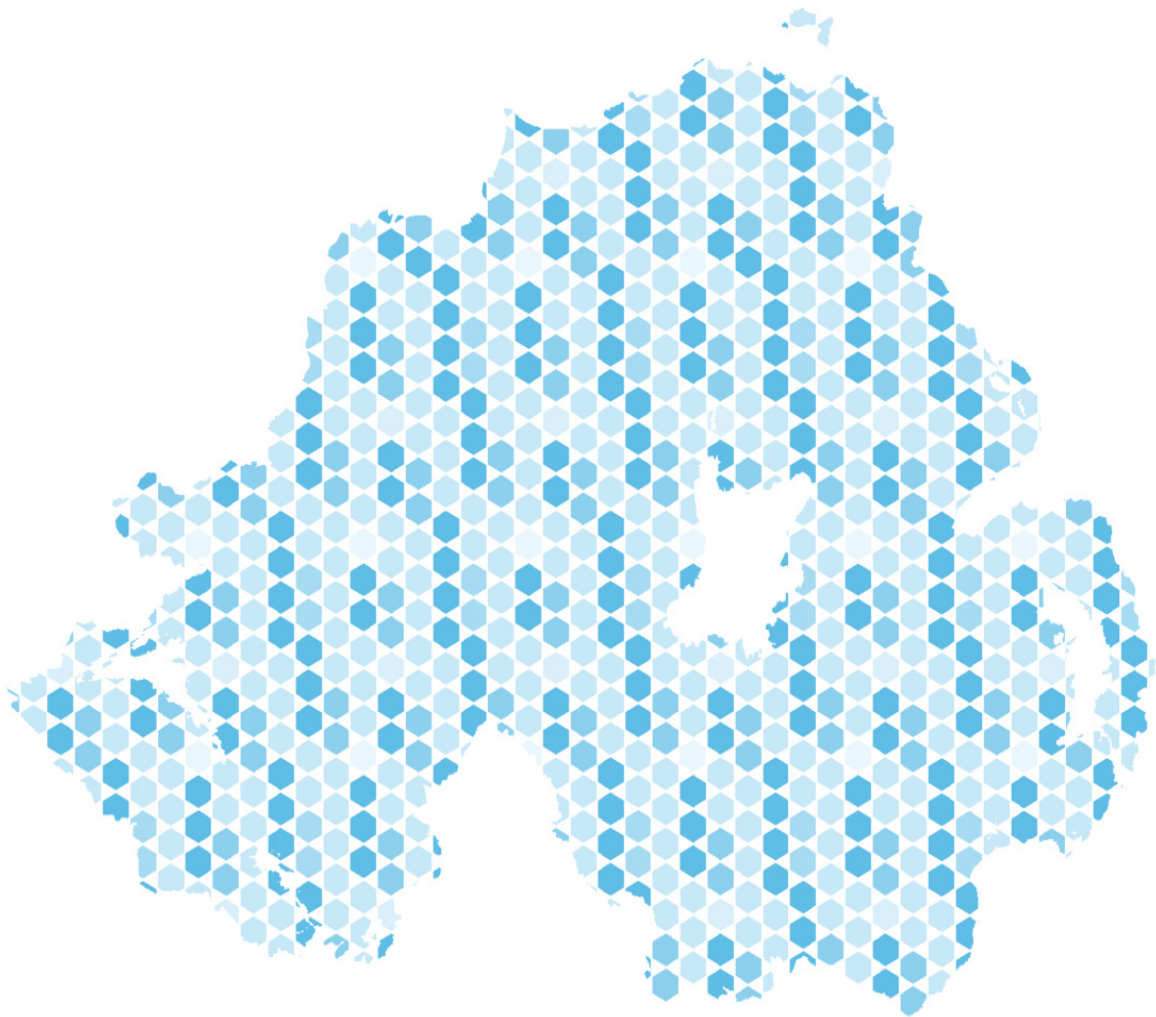


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Carrowdore Primary School,
Co Down

Report of an Inspection
in April 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section	Page
STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1. INTRODUCTION	
2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	
3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	
4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	
5. CONCLUSION	
APPENDIX	

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: Carrowdore Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 16/04/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-6020** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	17	15	23	21	23
Enrolments					
Primary	133	128	132	133	135
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
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): 95.5% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 93.3%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7.3 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.5 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19.3
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 23
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|-------|
| i. Clerical support: | 25 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 32.25 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 12 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.5%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 21.5%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 22%
- 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 |
| 80% | 80% | N/A |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Carrowdore Primary School is situated at the edge of the village of Carrowdore, on the Ards Peninsula, in County Down. The enrolment has increased over the past four years and currently stands at 135. Most of the children come from the village and the wider rural area. Approximately 22% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 21.5% have been identified as needing additional support with aspects of their learning, including a very small number of children who have statements of special educational need (SEN). At the time of the inspection three temporary teachers were employed in the school.

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, the teaching staff and the support 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.

Of the 112 questionnaires issued to the parents, 39 (approx 35%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including ten which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In their written comments most of the parents highlighted strengths of the school and a small number raised concerns about some aspects of the provision.

Six of the teachers responded to the online questionnaires and supplied additional comments; all of the support staff responded with one providing a written comment. All the responses indicated very high levels of support for the work of the school. The staff reported that they feel valued by the Principal and enjoy working in the school.

The governors expressed their commitment to the life and work of the school. They spoke very positively about the leadership of the Principal, the contribution of the staff, and the support that the school has within the local community.

In discussions held with a group of children in year 6, they talked positively about their experiences in school. The children valued the support given by their teachers and the opportunities they have to participate and perform in extra-curricular activities including school productions. They indicated that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their care and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has reported to, and discussed with the Principal and the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The children are very courteous and their behaviour is exemplary. The staff know the children well and contribute fully to the caring and supportive ethos of the school.

The key strengths of the pastoral provision include: the attention given to celebrating the children's work and achievements; the varied range of activities, events and visits which contribute to the children's personal and social development; and the pro-active approach taken by the teachers to support the children's health and wellbeing.

The children have the opportunity to contribute to decisions about aspects of school life that directly affect them through the School Council. Their opinions and ideas are valued and acted on, for example, their recommendations on the provision of playground resources.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). The school should develop and ratify a personal care policy and associated guidelines as a matter of urgency.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives high priority to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. There are a wide range of strategies and initiatives to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles, including opportunities to take part in a range of sports and sporting activities, the promotion of healthy lunches, the 'stay cool in school project' and the participation and success in the 'Save our Smiles Programme' and the 'Action Cancer Health Action Awards'.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The parents are kept very well informed about the school events through a regular newsletter and an e-mail and texting service. The Parent Teacher Association has raised significant funds which have helped to purchase additional resources for the school and enhance the children's learning experiences.

The school has developed very good links with the neighbouring pre-school centre and post primary school to help broaden the children's experiences and to support the children's transition to the next stage of their education.

Throughout the year the school hosts a variety of different events which the parents and the local community are invited to attend, for example, a Spring Fayre, Harvest Service, Nativity Play and Carol Service and an Intergenerational Gardening Project.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children have positive attitude to learning. They work well individually, in pairs and groups and evidence from their work in books and wall displays shows they take pride in the presentation of their work in response to the teachers' high expectations.

An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data for English and mathematics shows a fluctuation in the standards achieved by the children in both literacy and numeracy. In three out of the last four years, the school's performance in English and mathematics was above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics were in line with or above the NI average in three out of four years. The school's internal performance information indicates that most of the children attain in line with their ability in English and almost all in mathematics.

An analysis of the available data for those children identified as needing additional support with aspects of their learning, demonstrates that most of the children make satisfactory progress in line with their individual education plan (EP) targets and a minority, make sufficient progress to be removed from the SEN register.

The Principal has identified rightly, the need to improve standards further and is implementing a range of appropriate strategies to raise levels of attainment. The inspection confirms this as a key focus for development.

In all key stages, the children work regularly on a good range of ICT activities which complement and support their work in literacy and numeracy.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The most effective learning involved the children in a wide range of activities that integrated well talking and listening, reading and writing. Most of the teachers use effective questioning and provide good opportunities for the children to generate their own ideas and make their own judgements that build and extend the children's oral responses.

In the foundation stage (FS) and key stage 1(KS1), shared reading and topic work develop the children's spoken skills and confidence. In KS2, the children's talking and listening skills increase significantly through effective group and paired work, in which thinking skills and personal capabilities, such as, working with others are integral to the structure of the lessons.

In the FS and KS1, a majority of the children acquire a range of core reading skills which they then use to assist them in reading unfamiliar text. A small number of children benefit from the additional learning support of the Reading Partnership Programme. By the end of KS1, a majority of the children read with a satisfactory level of fluency, understanding and enjoyment. However, in a minority of classes, individual learning plans are not followed, and the work and learning activities do not match the needs and abilities of all of the children. This has resulted in un-realistic learning intentions for some children who have additional needs. In KS2, the children experience a variety of approaches, including shared, guided

and independent reading. The children respond imaginatively and critically to the teachers' well-managed discussions in shared reading activities, guided reading sessions, topic work, and the purposeful written tasks match the children's ability. The children develop appropriate study and research skills. By the end of KS2, most of the children achieve good standards in their reading; they read with fluency, expression and evident pleasure.

A significant strength of the provision for English is the systematic development of the children's writing skills. Modelled and shared writing strategies are used effectively to develop the children's writing in years 1 to 7. In the FS, the children become familiar with the different forms of writing. Using shared writing activities the teachers help the children develop effective letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions, such as simple sentence structure. The children's independent writing is developed effectively throughout the school; the children express their ideas with a quality of content appropriate to their ability. They write for a variety of purposes and audiences, particularly through meaningful topic work linked to the World Around Us. The children use appropriately dictionaries and thesauri to help them increase the accuracy of their written work. The children make good use of ICT for researching topic work, enhancing the presentation of their work and drafting and editing their writing. Overall, the children achieve very good standards in writing.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The school's programme for mathematics is suitably broad and the teachers work together to ensure that there is appropriate coherence and progression in the mathematics curriculum throughout the school. The co-ordinator has raised the profile of mathematics in the school. She appropriately identified the areas of measures and mental maths for development, purchased additional resources and centralised these to support and enhance the provision across the school. She has clear plans to develop further her co-ordinating role and to raise further the standards achieved by all the children and in particular those identified as underachieving in or requiring additional support with mathematics. The inspection findings endorse this priority.

In most classes, the mathematics lessons incorporate an appropriate balance of mental maths sessions practical activities and discussions. In the best practice, the teachers give the children appropriate time and encouragement to communicate their mathematical thinking and to explain the processes and strategies they used. Additional support is available through the Learning Support Teacher if required.

In the FS the emphasis on oral and practical activities and play-based contexts enable the children to gain a good understanding of the basics of number. Measures and directional language such as left, right, forward and backward are developed using, for example, programmable devices such as Bebot. During the lessons, the children were encouraged to think mathematically and to share their understanding with their peers.

In KS1 a particular focus has been placed on creating a more practical approach to the introduction of vertical addition through play based counting activities. By the end of KS1 the children use mental strategies well to perform basic calculations, can talk through the methods they used and demonstrate a good understanding of place value and 3D shapes.

In KS2 the teachers make very good efforts to set the learning in meaningful contexts and make very effective use of real life scenarios, for example, organising a children's party and planning a meal for four people. Resources such as local restaurant and fast food menus, real food items and shop receipts help to develop the children's understanding of financial

capability as well as their social and conversational skills. High quality questioning is often used to make connections, to recap on previous learning and to keep the children focused and on task. This very good practice needs to be disseminated more widely across all the key stages. By the end of KS2 the higher achieving children can talk confidently about their mathematics experiences; they are secure in their knowledge of number and can explain well the range of different strategies they use to solve problems. Almost all of the children attain good standards in mathematics by the end of KS2.

The teachers use ICT effectively to support the learning and teaching in mathematics.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The whole-school medium-term planning provides a clear overview to guide continuity in the children's learning. The teachers have made good progress in the development of topic based planning.

In the most effective practice, the medium-term planning is matched closely to the needs of the children and the teachers' evaluations inform appropriately future action for individuals and groups of children. However, this is not implemented consistently across the key stages resulting in insufficient emphasis on differentiation to meet children's individual learning needs.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, the quality of almost all of the teaching observed was good or better, and a minority of the lessons were outstanding. The lessons were well structured and suitably resourced.

In the most effective practice the children participated fully in a good balance of individual, group and whole-class activities; the teachers used very effective classroom management strategies to organise the various learning activities; they built well on the children's interests and experiences, and the learning activities were set in real and relevant contexts for the children. In addition, the teachers interacted very positively with the children and as a result the children developed in confidence and learned through taking risks and trying different approaches. On a few occasions the tasks set were not sufficiently well matched to meet the targets identified in the children's individual education plans and opportunities were missed to effectively develop learning.

The current provision for the children identified as requiring support with aspects of their learning is through in-class support, and regular withdrawal lessons by the part-time Learning Support Teacher and Outreach support from the SEELB.

Appropriate targets are set within the education plan (EP) but the plans lack precise teaching strategies to effect improvement in the children's learning.

The withdrawal sessions are not based on the area of learning in the class, and as such, do not always provide the continuum of learning that the children require. The staff also needs to review how the children's learning is managed on the return to class from the withdrawal sessions.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school has made good progress in developing the whole-school assessment processes in recent years. A wide range of standardised tests is used to obtain information about the children's levels of attainment to enable the teachers to identify key areas for the development of literacy and numeracy and to set individual targets for the children. The teachers have begun to refine their approach to target setting and this work needs to continue as planned, to ensure that the targets for individuals and groups of children are more specific and are supported by identified teaching strategies. It is important that the teachers reflect more precisely on the children's progress and the standards.

The teachers provide valuable oral feedback to the children on an individual basis during lessons. They mark the children's written work regularly and where this is most effective, the combination of constructive comments made by the teacher and self- and peer-assessment enables the children to make further improvement to the quality of their work. Appropriately, the teachers are developing a collegiate approach to the moderation of samples of the children's work.

The school keeps the parents well informed about their children's progress and development through two annual interviews and a written report at the end of the school year. The school operates an open-door policy should the parents wish to discuss any aspect of their child's progress.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of the leadership and management is good.

At the time of the inspection the Principal had been in post for less than one year. In this short time, she has established effective working relationships with the whole staff and is creating a collegial approach to decision-making. She has an appropriate vision for the future direction of the school.

She undertakes also the role of literacy coordinator and together she and the numeracy co-ordinator have completed useful curriculum audits and have made a good start to using quantitative data to identify areas of development for both literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinators have identified appropriately the need to evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences. This should be developed with a particular emphasis on the experiences of children with additional need.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school development plan (SDP) is compliant with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The Principal, staff and governors are currently formulating a new SDP in line with the 2010 regulations. Appropriate action plans are in place for English and mathematics and are focused on raising further the children's standards and achievements.

4.3 ACCOMODATION

The teachers have created stimulating displays of the children's work in the classrooms and in the corridors which support and celebrate the children's learning. Good use is made of the available outdoor space to provide additional learning opportunities for the children. The school is very well maintained.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are involved in the strategic planning and policy development for the school. They support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP and they have a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the school.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the well behaved and highly motivated children, who have positive attitudes to learning;
- the supportive ethos of the school exemplified through the very good quality of the pastoral provision;
- the high quality of the teaching, which was evaluated as good to outstanding in almost all of the lessons;
- the good standards achieved by the children in mathematics and the very good standards achieved in writing by the children; and
- the Principal's effective and supportive leadership, and her collegial vision for the development of the school, supported by all of the staff and Board of Governors.

5.2 The area for improvement is the need:

- to evaluate the effectiveness of the SEN provision in order to raise further the standards achieved by all of the children in English and mathematics

5.3 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 areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The drop off and pick up area at the front of the school is very restricted at the start and end of the school day and poses a potential risk to those using it.
- The playground used by the key stage 2 children is small and located at the front of the school in close proximity to the main school car park which is accessible to school traffic throughout the day.

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