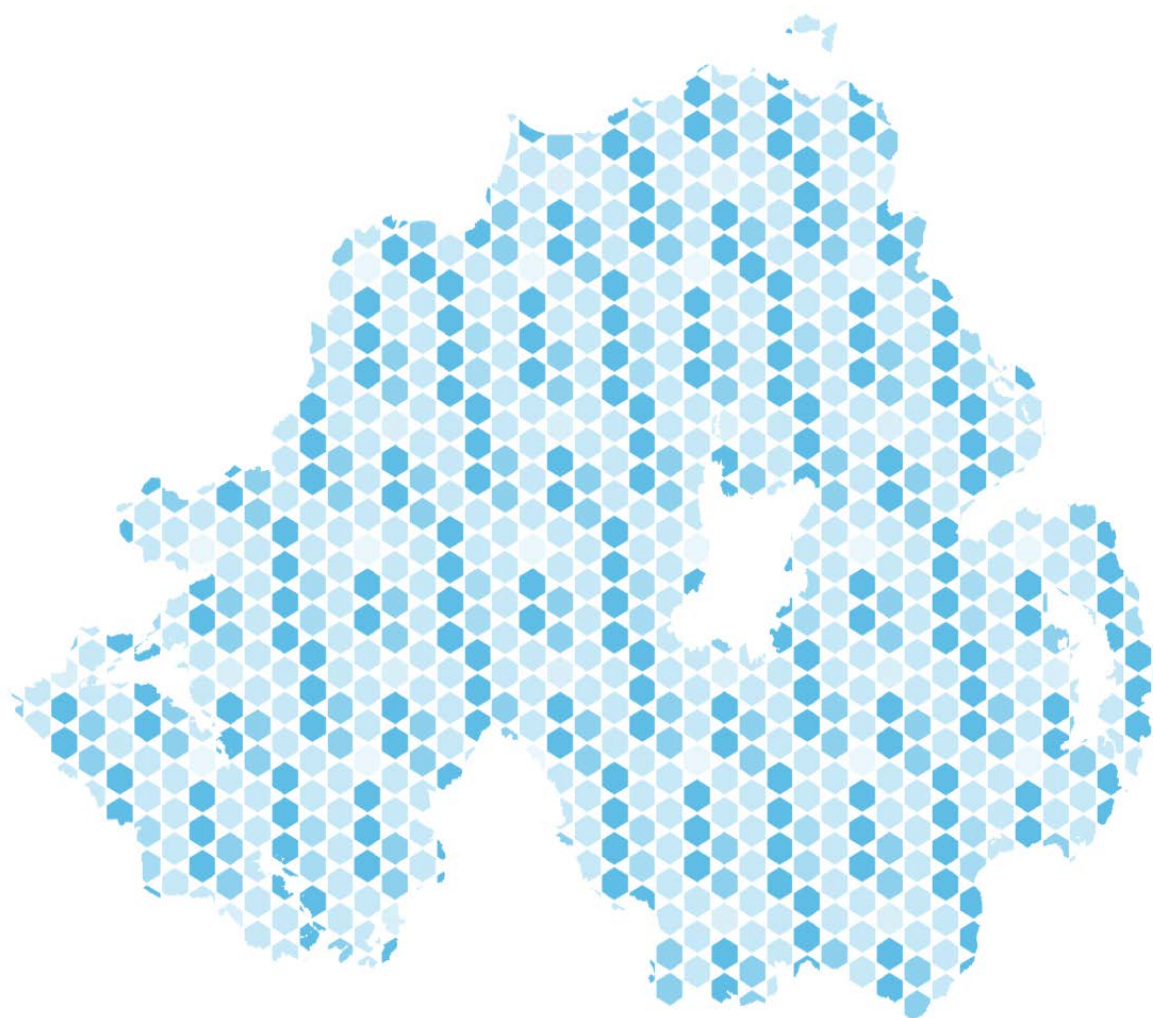


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Currie Primary School,  
Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2013

## CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	School Context	1
2.	Focus of inspection and overall finding	1
3.	Achievements and standards	1
4.	Provision for learning	2
5.	Leadership and management	3
6.	Summary of questionnaire responses	5

## Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

## Quantitative terms

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

## 1. School context

Currie Primary School is situated on the Limestone Road in the Tiger's Bay/Mountcollyer area of north Belfast. There are 139 children enrolled at the school. At the time of the inspection, 82% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 48% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There are currently twelve newcomer children in the school.

## 2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; 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.

### OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good; the quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

#### Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Very Good
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

### KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

## 3. Achievements and standards

**The quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.**

- The children are proud of their school and their standards of behaviour are exemplary. They are motivated and interested in their learning. The children manage and critique their own learning using well-developed thinking skills and personal capabilities. They work independently and collegially in pairs and small groups. This is a particular strength of the work of the school and it is having a positive impact on the standards the children attain. The children experiencing difficulties in their learning are fully involved in the life of the school and work

confidently alongside their peers. Children with a wide range of additional needs, including those with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs are supported well and with sensitivity to their circumstances. All of the children identified as having special educational needs are making very good progress in their learning and behaviour.

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows a significant and improving trend in English and, in particular, mathematics. The school's performance in English, although below the Northern Ireland (NI) average, has risen to be in line with the average for schools in the same free school meals category. Performance in mathematics has risen to be in line with the NI average and well above the average for similar schools. Internal performance data indicates that, by the end of KS2, almost all of the children are achieving standards in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The acting Principal, staff and governors have recognised the need to raise standards in literacy further and have already put in place several initiatives which internal performance data shows are impacting positively on the children's levels of achievement.
- In literacy almost all of the children attain good standards in talking and listening, reading and in writing. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and show a keen interest in their novels. The children produce good quality writing for a range of audiences and purposes appropriate to their interests and stage of development. The quality of presentation is consistently good throughout the school. A particular strength of the literacy provision is the children's ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings about the wide variety of experiences they have in school and in their community.
- The children are enthusiastic and enjoy their work in numeracy. The most able use their mathematical knowledge in real-life contexts and with developing understanding. Important work with the parents through maths workshops has enabled them to support their children in their learning. The children have high levels of understanding of all areas of the mathematics curriculum. In the mental maths sessions they demonstrate very good flexibility in their thinking and explain confidently the processes they use. By the end of Key Stage (KS) 2 the pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to challenging, real-life investigative activities and use mathematical language appropriately in, for example, setting up their own business enterprise.
- By the end of KS 2 the children achieve very good standards in ICT and use their skills confidently across a range of contexts.

#### **4. Provision for learning**

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding; half of the lessons were very good and one-quarter were outstanding. Key strengths of the planning and teaching are the teachers' realistically high expectations of what the children can achieve with very good challenge for the more able and very effective support for those experiencing difficulties with their learning. The

teachers take good account of the children's prior knowledge and are particularly skilful at linking the children's needs and interests to provide a wide range of well-connected learning contexts where the children have opportunities to transfer and apply their skills and knowledge to real life experiences.

- The quality of the provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good. An effective system identifies early those children who require additional help with aspects of their learning. The children's needs are met through highly effective in-class differentiation and by the well-targeted withdrawal and in-class provision. Assessment data indicates that all of the children requiring additional support make very good progress and are achieving in line with their ability. Of particular note is the wide range of effective strategies used to support those children with complex emotional, social and behavioural needs, often at critical times in the child's life. The children identified as having English as a second language are sensitively and skilfully integrated into school life, with a sound understanding of how to support them as they develop in their use of the English language. They are supported appropriately in class with differentiated activities and are attaining good standards in line with expectation.
- The teachers mark the children's work carefully and provide clear guidance about how to improve their work further. The children have individual targets and there is regular recognition of achievement at class and whole school level.
- The school gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through a range of strategies and initiatives to raise the children's awareness of, and encourage them to adopt, healthy lifestyles. There are regular opportunities for the children to engage in a wide range of outdoor and sporting activities. In particular the award winning 'Bike It' scheme has developed an important range of skills and attitudes to being fit and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The children show respect for their school community and interact with care and consideration with their peers and with the adults who care for them. The children's views are sought out and acted upon and they are aware of their responsibility in ensuring their school is welcoming, friendly and inclusive. The children take pride in their school and are keen to share their activities and achievements with visitors. Working relationships at all levels are excellent and there is a common drive to reflect and embed the school's ethos which is summarised in the school's motto: 'Light a light for the future'. The pastoral care arrangements reflect the values inherent in this statement and are lived out daily by the school community.

## **5. Leadership and management**

**The overall quality of leadership and management in this school is very good.**

- The acting Principal, supported well by the Board of Governors and the whole school community, provides excellent strategic direction for the school. All of the staff work collegially to ensure that the provision is continuously evaluated and improved. The school development planning process includes regular and effective consultation with the children, their parents and the governors and focuses appropriately on achieving the highest possible standards for all of the children, while recognising the importance of making the school a key resource for further community development.

- The senior leadership team, including the acting vice-principal and the co-ordinators provide very good curricular leadership within a clear agenda for school improvement. There is a strong collegial approach to school improvement. This is evidenced, for example, through the effective use of data from standardised tests and the teachers' evaluations of the children's performance in literacy and numeracy to set appropriate targets for the whole-school, each class and individual children.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the inspection team's evaluation is that the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. In meeting the governors, it was evident they are well informed about the school and contribute to the overall strategic planning and policy development. The governors carry out their associated challenge function very effectively, adopt a proactive role in the school development planning process, and support the acting Principal and teachers well in raising further the educational performance for all of the children.
- The school has worked hard and with success to develop its links with the parents; the award-winning 'Friends of Currie Primary School' provides an important forum for the parents and guardians to support the school in achieving the priorities agreed in the school development plan. There are highly effective procedures in place to keep parents well informed about their children's progress. The parents receive regular newsletters and information about school events as well as planning documents which indicate how parents can support the learning; the parents' views are valued and respected. The school uses a wide variety of voluntary and statutory agencies to extend support and enhance the children's learning experience within very effective multi-disciplinary partnerships. An important feature of these arrangements is their seamless integration into the priorities in the school development plan and the evaluation of their impact on raising further the standards the children attain.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children; these arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the children, they stated that they feel safe and happy in school and that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good; the quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## 6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	133
Number of Questionnaires Returned	23
Percentage of Returns	19.32%
Number of Comments	6

The parents highlighted the position of the school as 'the heart of the community', the friendly approachable staff and the help provided for children having difficulties with their learning.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	9
Number of Comments	2

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	6
Number of Comments	0

The teachers and support staff expressed the sense of teamwork in the school, with classroom assistants and ancillary staff working for the benefit of the children.

The children spoke of their pride in their school and explained their understanding of their school's motto. They spoke of the many trips that they enjoyed and how they were aware of what to do if they were worried about anything.

The governors expressed their confidence in the acting Principal and all of the staff in providing the best for all of the children. They highlighted the strong sense of community within the school and the many links established with the parents and outside agencies which contribute to the children's learning experiences.



## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Currie Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 13/05/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 101-0063** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	26	21	18	22	30
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	137	131	142	133	139
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 are based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year  
 (expressed as a percentage): 88.8% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the  
 Special Educational Needs Register: 90.45%

<b>Primary &amp; Reception</b>	<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Special Unit</b>	<b>Irish Medium Unit</b>
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- D. i. Number of Teachers  
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 9.4 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 20
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 30 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 60 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 90 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 4.3%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 48%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 82%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2011/12 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):
- |                |                    |              |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Irish</b> |
| 67%            | 83.3%              | N/A          |

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