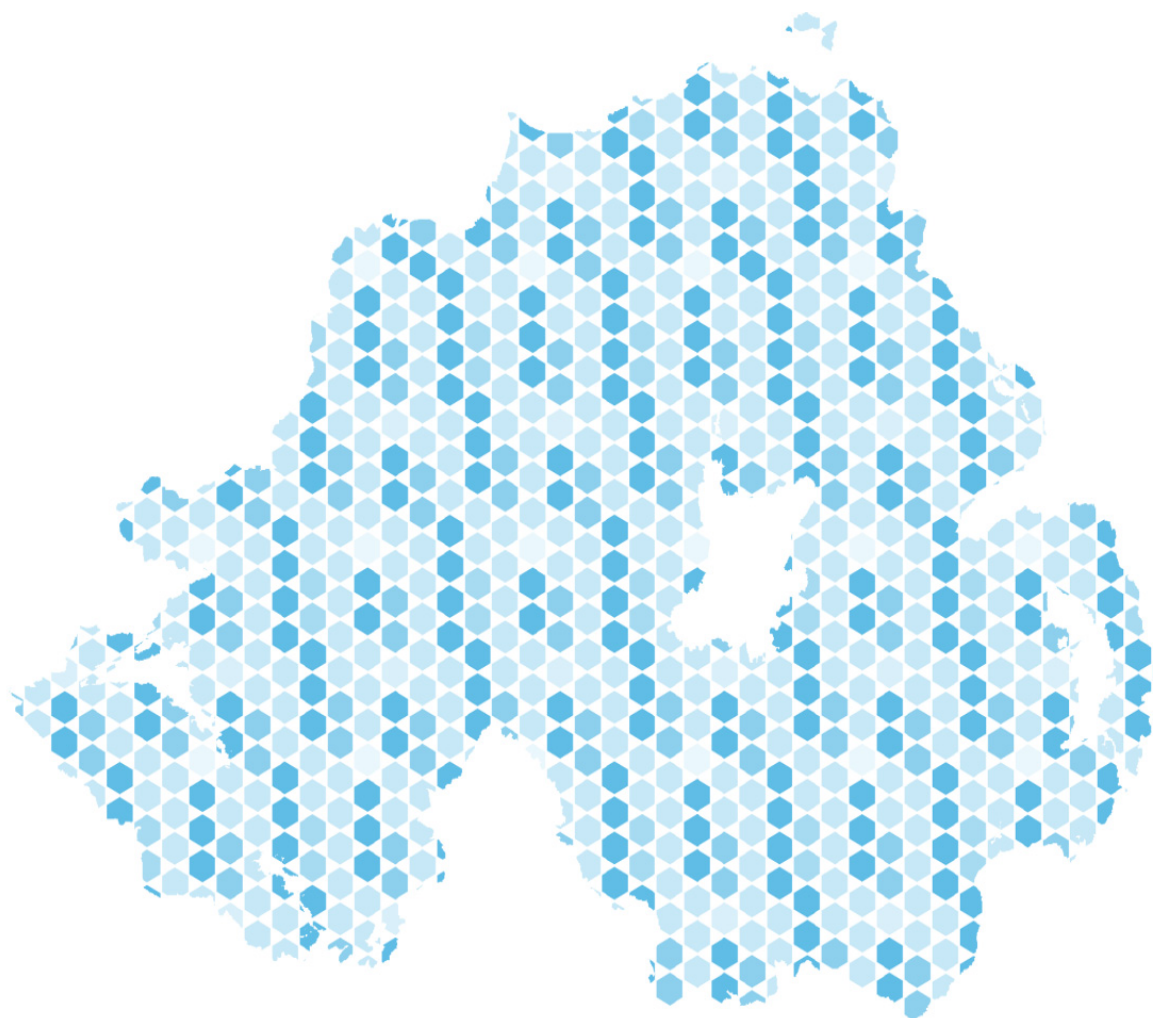


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dromore Road Primary School,
Warrenpoint

Report of an Inspection
in February 2012

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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: Dromore Road Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 27/02/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 501-1520** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	13	12	8	13	18
Enrolments					
Primary	81	81	77	82	76
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): 92.8% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register: 93.9%
- | Primary &
Reception | Nursery
Unit | Special
Unit | Irish Medium
Unit |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4.8
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15.83 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 22
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 30 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 27.5 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 10 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 6.6%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 17.1%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 35.5%
- 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 |
|---------|-------------|-------|
| 75% | 83.33% | N/A |
- xi. If there is a composite class with reception children in it, please indicate the numbers of children in the other year groups:
- | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 18 | 13 | 9 |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Dromore Road Primary School is situated on Upper Dromore Road in Warrenpoint, County Down. The enrolment in the school has fluctuated slightly over the past four years and currently stands at 76. Almost all of the children in the school come from the immediate area. At the time of the inspection 35% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 17% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There are 13 newcomer children in the school.

The school has experienced a number of complex staffing arrangements over the past five years; out of the 4.8 teachers present at the time of the inspection, only two were full time permanent members of staff: one of these teachers has been Acting-principal for approximately three and a half years.

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 teachers 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 with groups of children from years 6 and 7.

Of the 60 questionnaires issued to the parents, 16 (27%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch including a very small number which contained an additional written comment. All of the responses from the questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents valued the friendly, helpful staff and the support for those children with additional learning needs.

All of the teachers and support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the staff indicated that they are happy in their work in the school.

The governors expressed strong appreciation of the whole staff for their team work, their willingness to undertake additional responsibilities when necessary and for their commitment to meeting the needs of all of the children. They paid particular tribute to the Acting-principal for her dedication, leadership and guidance over the past three and a half years.

In discussions held with the year 6 and 7 children, they spoke enthusiastically about the happy, caring ethos in the school, about their learning experiences and about how they contribute to school life. They also indicated that they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. This is evidenced through, for example, the inclusive ethos, the very good working relationships at all levels and the effective deployment of the support staff to enhance the children's learning experiences. It is also demonstrated through the Playground Friends system, the year 7 children's contribution to the induction programme for the year 1 children and the use of class suggestion boxes and the 'You Share, We Care' system to enable the children to express their opinions about aspects of school life.

The staff is highly committed to ensuring that the diverse needs of all of the children, including those on the special needs register or with English as an Additional Language, are clearly understood, addressed and evaluated.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children; these arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING and PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, participation in the Sport for Life and Boost Better Breaks programmes and through the range of extra-curricular sporting activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has developed very good links with the parents, the local library and businesses and a wide range of medical and educational professionals. They have a well-established cross-community link with a neighbouring school and have recently begun to develop the link further through participation in the Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme. They are currently participating in the 'Back on Track' programme which is a community programme aimed at supporting identified children with aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The parents are kept well informed about their children's curriculum and progress through a personal learning plan and an individual progress meeting with the class teacher in term 1; a further progress meeting in term 2 and through a detailed annual written report in term 3. They are notified about important dates, events and achievements through the school prospectus and the monthly newsletter. The school has identified, appropriately, the need to develop further the link with parents to include programmes which will enable them to support further their children's learning.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are very welcoming, courteous and keen to talk about their learning; most of them settle quickly to their work and engage actively in their learning tasks, demonstrating good organisational skills and levels of independence. They collaborate well in pairs and small groups to solve problems and to carry out investigative learning activities. They are developing a strong sense of responsibility for their environment and for the needs of the wider community.

During the inspection, there was a small number of children who were less well settled and whose disruptive behaviour had an adverse effect on their own learning and on that of other children. The school is actively seeking advice from the Southern Education and Library Board's (SELB) Behaviour Support Team in order to meet these children's needs.

In the foundation stage (FS), the children learn through songs, rhymes and a combination of formal and play-based activities. The teachers have, appropriately, identified the need to take more account of the children's pre-school experiences and to develop further the programme and planning for play-based learning in order to promote the children's sense of enquiry, to support the development of their language and communication skills and to develop further their early mathematical skills, language and concepts.

During the inspection, there was evidence to indicate that, by year 7, a majority of the newcomer children are proficient in their use of the English language and make good progress in their learning.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows considerable fluctuation in the school's performance in English and mathematics. In both English and mathematics, the school's outcomes have been in line with or above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in one of the four years. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the outcomes have also been in line with or above the average in one of the four years.

During the inspection, the evidence gained from lesson observations and discussions with the children, together with a scrutiny of the children's completed written work and examination of the school's internal data, indicates that, by year 7, a majority of the children attain good standards in literacy and most of the children attain satisfactory standards in numeracy, commensurate with their ability.

Throughout the school, there is a need for improvement in the standards of presentation of the children's written work.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy action plan outlines appropriate actions for improvement, including the development of guided writing and how the staff will monitor its impact on the children's achievements and standards.

The school makes good use of the SELB's 'Framework for Literacy' to plan the overall Literacy provision. There is a need for the teachers to ensure that the planned learning experiences within each class match more closely the children's learning needs and stage of understanding so that their literacy knowledge and skills are consolidated more effectively.

Most of the children, including the newcomer children, display good or better oral communication skills. When given appropriate opportunities, they talk and listen very well in paired and group tasks; they can express their understanding and viewpoints articulately and can present well-reasoned persuasive arguments. By the end of KS2, most of the children can give confident and extended responses to open-ended questions and listen carefully to the contributions of others when they discuss their work.

The quality of the children's reading is good; they learn to read systematically using carefully banded reading schemes and a wide range of appropriate materials including novels, poetry, reference and multimedia texts. The younger children learn through a good range of reading activities including shared and guided reading and story-telling sessions. They are developing an enjoyment of reading along with a good range of problem solving strategies to help them read and understand unfamiliar text. The adults who interact with them during their reading activities provide effective support. The older children are able to discuss and evaluate some aspects of textual information such as how vocabulary, structure and ideas are used to convey meaning. The children's reading skills progress steadily as they move through the school and by year 7, most read with confidence, fluency and enthusiasm.

The quality of most of the children's written work is good. The teachers use a structured phonics programme well to extend the children's spelling strategies. In the FS, the children's word knowledge and simple sentence building skills are developed through a good blend of shared and guided writing activities; as they progress through KS1, their independent writing is promoted appropriately and, by the end of year 4, a majority of the children can express their ideas with a length and quality of content appropriate to their stage of development. In KS2, the children extend further their range of writing styles, purposes and audiences and most produce extended writing of a good or better standard.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

The action plan for mathematics identifies, appropriately, the need to develop the children's understanding of processes and of the application of mathematics to problem-solving activities. It will be important for the staff to review and extend the plan in light of the inspection findings and of rigorous self-evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching in mathematics.

There is a comprehensive whole-school programme for mathematics which provides clear guidance for the development of each area of the mathematics curriculum. In planning for the delivery of the programme, there is a need for the teachers to ensure that each area is revisited regularly to enable the children to develop their learning incrementally and consistently.

In the most effective lessons observed during the inspection, the children were actively engaged in the completion of appropriately challenging problem solving activities which focused on the development and consolidation of key mathematical concepts; they were encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, to reflect meaningfully on the level of their success and to consider what action they needed to take to improve the quality of their work. In the less effective practice, the planned learning activities were routine and did not meet the needs of all of the children. In all of the classes there was a need for more explicit development of the children's mathematical language.

Throughout the school, the children demonstrate positive attitudes towards mathematics. Almost all of the year 7 children are competent in the completion of pencil and paper calculations, including those involving fractions and percentages, and most are also secure in their understanding of concepts such as two-dimensional shape, angles and co-ordinates. In discussions with the children, they were less confident in their use of mental mathematics strategies and in their practical knowledge and application of concepts such as area, perimeter and capacity. In similar discussions with the year 4 children, a small number of the children were able to complete stage appropriate mental calculations accurately and were secure in their understanding of concepts such as length and time.

There is a need for the staff to ensure that the children have sufficient opportunity to consolidate their understanding of key mathematical concepts, to develop a range of strategies for working with number and to discuss their work using accurate mathematical language.

The school's internal records indicate that by the end of year 7 most of the children attain satisfactory standards in mathematics.

Throughout the school, ICT is being used effectively to support learning and teaching. The children use ICT very well to research and present their work in a wide variety of forms including the excellent use of multi-media and digital story-telling which the teachers link meaningfully with the children's work in Literacy. During the inspection, there was also evidence of the children making very good use of a range of programmable devices and ICT programmes to support their learning in aspects of numeracy such as shape and angles.

The school has, appropriately, identified the need for this very good practice to be extended further and externally accredited through for example participation in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ICT accreditation scheme.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The medium-term planning for each of the areas of learning is of a consistently good quality; it identifies clearly the planned learning intentions, the differentiated activities to meet the needs of all of the children and the planned opportunities to promote the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities. In the most effective practice this good planning is reflected in the classroom practice and in the quality of the children's learning. In a few classes, there is a need for the teachers to be more flexible in their use of the planning in order to build more appropriately on the children's responses.

The teachers complete regular written evaluations of the planning and of the children's learning. In the most effective practice, these evaluations are used well to inform future planning for the class as a whole and to meet the needs of groups and individuals.

3.2 TEACHING

The teachers are dedicated, hard-working and focused on ensuring the holistic development of each child.

During the inspection most of the teaching observed was good or better and in a very small number of the lessons it was outstanding. The need for improvement in the quality of teaching was identified in the remainder of the lessons observed.

In the most effective practice, the teachers built effectively on the children's prior knowledge and experience; they were creative in connecting the children's learning across the curriculum, provided a motivating stimulus for the learning and related it well to practical contexts. In these lessons, the teachers were skilful in retaining the key focus for learning whilst exploiting the opportunity to promote the development of the children's self management and collaborative working skills. In the less effective practice, the lessons lacked pace, the teachers had low expectations of what the children could achieve and there was insufficient opportunity for the children to consolidate their learning.

Throughout the school, the classroom assistants are deployed effectively to support the children's learning, particularly in relation to the provision for special educational needs (SEN).

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers use a wide range of strategies to monitor and record the children's progress.

In a majority of the classes the teachers make the intended learning explicit for the children and the children have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve the desired learning outcome. In the most effective practice, the teachers use the plenary sessions well to encourage the children to reflect on the extent of their learning and on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

In all the classes, the teachers respond well to the children's written work with constructive oral or written comments. In the most effective practice, the children are provided with appropriate opportunity to make the corrections and suggested improvements to their work.

In the FS, the use of observations to assess the children's progress and to inform planning is at an early stage of development. The FS staff has, appropriately, identified the need to develop and implement a more integrated approach to observation, assessment and planning for progression in the children's learning.

The school carries out a range of standardised tests to assess the children's levels of achievement in English and mathematics. The outcomes from these tests are used effectively to identify those children who would benefit from additional learning support, to set individual targets for improvement and to identify a few appropriate priorities for whole-school development.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for SEN is good.

The school places a high priority on supporting those children who have barriers to or experience difficulties in aspects of their learning in literacy and numeracy. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) makes effective use of all available resources to provide a good blend of withdrawal and in-class support for specific children and a number of 'booster' programmes have been implemented successfully for identified children to ensure that they gain access to well-targeted assistance in response to their short- and medium-term learning needs.

Special educational needs is prioritised appropriately within the school development plan; the recent actions to improve further the quality of the provision include the development of a very effective communication system between the SENCO, class teachers and classroom assistants (CAs). It will be important for the SENCO and staff to evaluate the impact of this innovation on the children's learning outcomes.

The staff, including the CAs, collaborates well to develop carefully constructed education plans (IEPs) and programmes to meet the children's needs. The parents are consulted meaningfully about their children's needs and support programmes and are kept well-informed about the progress they make. The records of the IEP reviews, together with teachers' analysis of the school's internal data and their evaluations of the children's progress in the various support interventions, indicate that most of the children are benefiting from the learning programmes provided and are making good progress.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Acting-principal has been in post for approximately three and a half years. During that time she has provided effective leadership for the governors, staff and parents; she has managed the changing staffing arrangements successfully in order to ensure consistency and continuity in the children's experiences and has continued to develop the school to meet the needs of the children and the wider community. As Acting-principal she currently holds responsibility for management, Literacy, numeracy and assessment, in addition to her teaching responsibility.

She is willingly and ably supported in her work by the teachers and the support staff.

The SENCO leads and manages effectively the school's range of support provisions for those children with additional needs.

There is a well-planned schedule for monitoring aspects of the school's provision, through, for example, examination of the teachers' planning, consideration of the children's completed written work, classroom observations and scrutiny of the school's internal data; the teachers are provided with individual or collective feedback, as appropriate, and the outcomes are used well to inform future practice. There is a need for this good work to be developed further and to be used as the basis for rigorous evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Within the past three years the staff has carried out a number of purposeful curriculum audits and a range of meaningful consultations with the children and the parents. During the inspection there was evidence to indicate that the outcomes from these consultations and audits have been used effectively to improve the quality of communication with the parents about the school's safeguarding practices, to enhance the outdoor play provision during lunch break and to develop a consistent approach to the teaching of guided reading. It will be important for the staff to ensure that the self-evaluation procedures encompass the thorough evaluation of learning and teaching in order to identify more specifically the developments which will bring about improvement in the overall quality of the learning and teaching and in the standards the children attain.

The School Development Plan (SDP) outlines a range of appropriate actions to support and improve the educational and pastoral provision for the children and is appropriately aligned with the staff development and PRSD programmes. It will be important for the Principal, staff and governors to review the current SDP in light of the inspection findings.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The staff makes very good use of all the space available for teaching and learning. There is, however, insufficient working space to facilitate private meetings with parents and to accommodate the wide range of medical and educational professionals who support the children's learning on a regular basis.

The standards of caretaking and cleaning are very good.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are supportive of the staff at all levels; they are actively engaged in all aspects of school life and are aware of the potential impact of the school's fluctuating staffing and enrolment trends on the delivery of the curriculum. It will be important for them to review the current management arrangements within the school in order to ensure a more equitable distribution of responsibility for key areas of the curriculum and school development.

The school is adequately resourced to support teaching and learning in most areas of the curriculum. In light of the inspection findings, it will be important for the staff and governors to review resource allocation to support the development of effective play-based learning both indoors and in the outdoor area.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the welcoming, courteous children, who demonstrate good organisational skills and levels of independence;
- the good quality of the provision for children with additional needs and the progress they make;
- the good standards achieved by a majority of the children in literacy;
- the very good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and for the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- the very good quality of provision for ICT and the standards the children achieve; and
- the dedicated, hard-working Acting-principal, teachers and support staff.

5.2 The areas for development include the need to:

- raise further the standards the children attain, particularly in numeracy; and

- ensure that the self-evaluation procedures encompass the rigorous evaluation of learning and teaching in order to identify more specifically the developments which will bring about improvement in the overall quality of the learning and teaching.

5.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified two 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.

5.4 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is no vision access from the corridor into a number of the classrooms.
- There is a need for a risk assessment of the FS outdoor play area to be carried out.

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