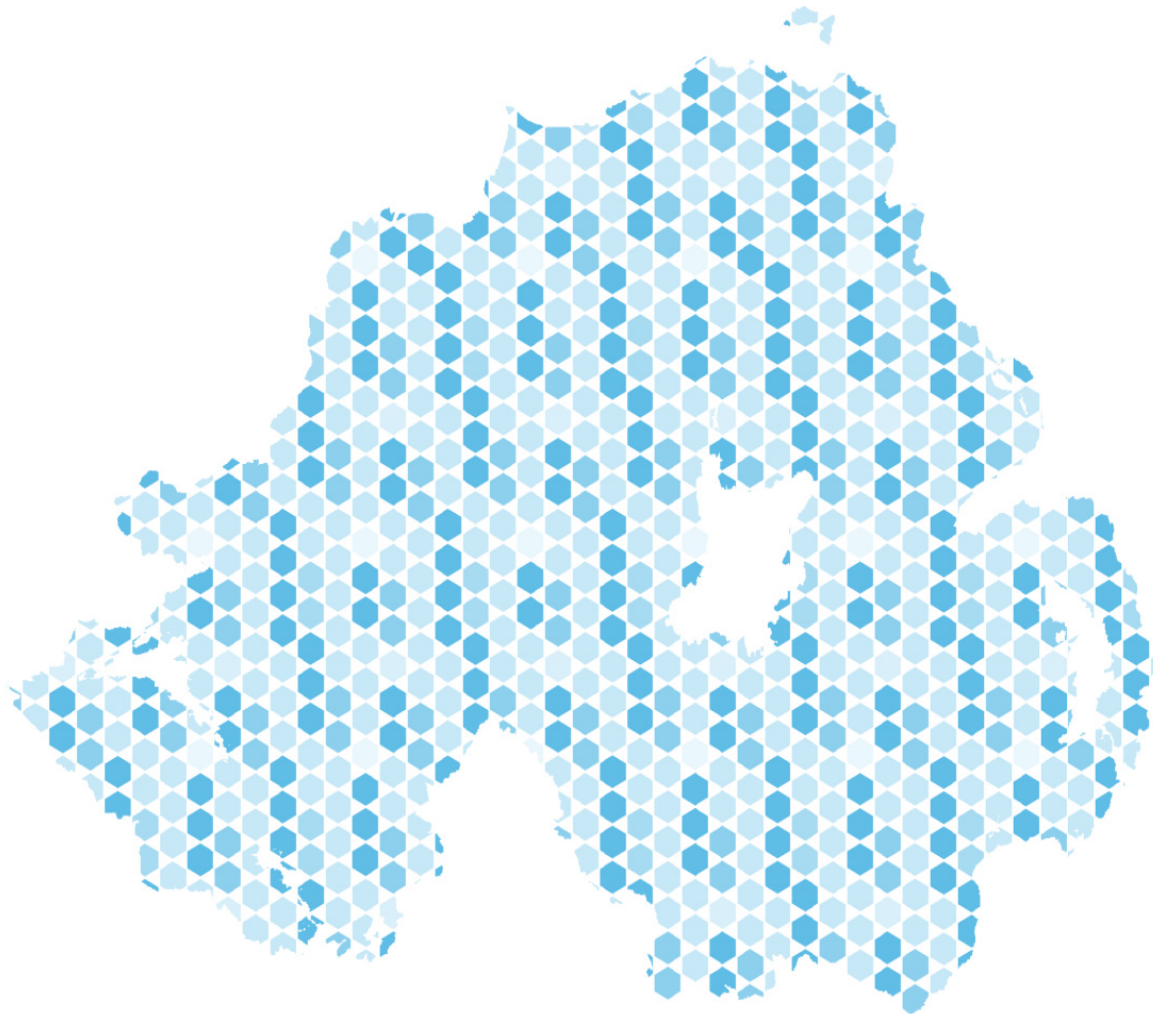


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Earlview Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Newtownabbey

Report of an Inspection
in November 2010

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Earlview Primary School and nursery unit is situated in New Mossley, Newtownabbey. The majority of the children come from within a five mile radius of the local area. The enrolment of the school has remained steady over the past three years and currently stands at 120 children within the primary school and 26 children in the nursery unit. The school reports that approximately 58% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 39% 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 a group of the children from year 6.

Eighty-three questionnaires were issued to parents within the primary school: approximately 20% percent were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which six contained additional written comments. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the care and attention shown for the well-being of all the children, by the dedicated and supportive staff.

Six teachers and one member of the support staff completed the online questionnaire; there were five written comments. The responses were wholly positive regarding their commitment to continuous school improvement and in raising the children's standards and attainments.

In the nursery unit, a minority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and one parent made an additional written comment which indicated a high level of satisfaction with how well her child had settled into the nursery environment.

The governors spoke very positively about the caring, inclusive ethos of the school and about their support for the school's well-developed links with the local community. They reported that they were kept well informed and had become more actively involved in the life and work of the school.

The children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about the help and encouragement they receive from their teachers and the support staff and their enjoyment of the extra-curricular activities. The children know what to do and who to speak to if they have any worries 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 both the school and the nursery unit is very good. The Principal, teaching staff, classroom assistants and support staff work effectively to provide a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where all of the children are valued and respected. The supportive ethos across the school helps the children to develop their self-confidence; the standard of the behaviour of most of the children during the inspection was very good. The children respond well to the teachers; there are well-embedded routines for organising group work quickly and effectively. The children understand and value highly the individual merit systems and the celebration of their work which has a positive influence on their levels of motivation. The children are mature in carrying out their positions of responsibility, including the buddy system in the playground. The school has consulted appropriately with the parents when revising pastoral policies. The school is well maintained.

The relationships between the adults and the children, and between the children when working together, are excellent. The lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. There is often a sense of fun and enjoyment reflected in the activities, which encourages the children to apply themselves to the tasks.

The nursery unit has appropriate policies and procedures for pastoral care. The nursery has a warm and welcoming atmosphere and relationships at all levels are very good. The children have settled in quickly to their new environment and enjoy the good variety of activities and experiences on offer both indoors and outdoors. Children who require support with aspects of their learning are well integrated within the unit.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

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

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. There is a well attended breakfast club, healthy breaks with a reward system, and daily access to drinking water. Across the school the children have regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play and sports, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

There are strong links between the nursery unit, the school and the community. The staff keep parents well informed about what is happening in the school. The Principal and the teachers have developed a strong sense of community within the school. The school encourages the parents to become actively involved in school events and in supporting the children's learning. There is a welcoming parents' room for those who come into the school and there are parent volunteers in the nursery. There is a good programme of reading support staffed by volunteers from local businesses. Last year the school had a successful musical.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are articulate and confident when discussing about their learning. The majority of them are highly motivated and settle quickly to their work. They listen well to, and value, each other's opinions, when working collaboratively in pairs and groups, supporting and encouraging one another. At foundation stage (FS), the children experience a stimulating play-based curriculum and most are able to sustain extended periods of concentrated play. They access the range of support materials and equipment provided by the teachers independently. As they progress across the key stages the children are able to make connections in their learning, which reflects in the good developments being made to planning for the curriculum to which they have an input.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is below the Northern Ireland average. When compared with schools in a similar free schools meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are below the average.

The school has recently and appropriately introduced the Non-reading Intelligence Test in order to assess whether the children are achieving at a level commensurate with their ability. The teachers are monitoring closely the progress of the majority of the children who are underachieving and the school's internal data is beginning to show improving trends. The inspection findings confirm that this is an important area for development which the school urgently needs to address building on the good teaching observed and using all of the available data in a more focused way to demonstrate clear evidence of improved standards in English and mathematics.

The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good. The majority of the children are supported well in the classes, most of which are composite, through effective planning, appropriately differentiated work and by well-trained classroom assistants. There remains the need for some of these children to have more individual focused support.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy policy and the writing scheme provide a good guide for progression across the year groups. The detailed planning for literacy makes good links across the curriculum and is reflected well in the practice observed during the inspection. The teachers use ICT effectively to support the teaching of English and to develop the children's learning through a range of suitable and age-appropriate activities. From the earliest years, the children use ICT well to develop their word recognition, their spelling and their writing.

The children have many good opportunities to develop their listening skills and to talk. In play-based learning in the FS, and in whole-class group discussions in KS1 and 2, the children interact well with one another, listen respectfully to the views of their peers and respond with enthusiasm. The staff use skilful questioning to encourage the children to make extended contributions and take an active role in their learning.

There are a wide range and variety of texts to encourage the children to read and to support the development of their reading. The teachers develop the children's phonological awareness through the use of a structured commercial programme and use a range of word recognition strategies and include approaches used in reading recovery to teach the children to read. The children are aware of these strategies and use them successfully to decipher new language and to develop their understanding. Across the key stages the teachers reinforce the children's reading skills in other curriculum areas.

The children enjoy listening to stories and reading their class novel. By the end of KS2 most of the children read with fluency and meaning. The teachers make good use of the school library to develop a love of reading. In KS2 the children maintain a library log to record the books which they have read and to develop their critical awareness of the language used in the books.

In the FS the children are encouraged to write when they feel ready to do so. There are opportunities in play-based sessions for independent and emergent writing. From an early age they are encouraged and supported to write independently. At all stages within the school, the planning allows for a range of different styles of writing for different audiences. The teachers encourage the children to write well; their letter formation is good and most of them take pride in the presentation of their work. There are appropriate links with the local community which allow the children to write for a meaningful purpose. The progression in writing is evident across the year groups; in KS2 many of the writing tasks are linked effectively to the topic and there are good examples of writing across the curriculum. The standards of presentation and the content of the writing are generally good. There is a need to ensure that grammar and new language learned are put into a meaningful context as soon as possible to support the children's comprehension.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision in mathematics is good.

The school recognises the need to review the whole-school planning to ensure progression and clear lines of development in mathematics. In their individual planning, the teachers plan and review effectively for the teaching of mathematics across the key stages. They exploit opportunities to link the children's learning in mathematics to other areas of the curriculum, and use meaningful everyday contexts which motivate and engage the children in learning. The teachers use a good range of practical resources and strategies to promote and support the learning and teaching of mathematics.

In the FS, the children are developing their confidence in the use of mathematical language and their understanding of mathematical concepts through a range of practical activities including play-based learning. The teachers and support staff use meaningful contexts well to develop the children's mathematical thinking. Across the curriculum the teachers encourage the children to make links between mathematics and their everyday life across the curriculum.

In KS1 and 2 the children use mathematical language with increasing fluency. They show a good understanding of number, shape and space and measures. The teachers integrate good opportunities for the children to use their knowledge of data handling across the curriculum. Mental mathematics activities are an integral part of the mathematics provision. In the best practice, in most of the lessons observed, the teachers provided challenging and well-paced activities which engaged the children's interest and promoted their mathematical thinking.

Across the key stages, the teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboard to involve the children in their learning and to stimulate their thinking. They integrate efficiently the use of appropriate computer programmes and programmable devices to develop further their mathematical thinking.

The school has been involved in the initiative 'Raising Attainment in Maths' to help raise the standards in numeracy across the school over the last academic year. There was improvement in the achievements of the majority of the small group of children involved. The school reports that it learned much from the initiative with regard to targeting and supporting individual children. It has not, however, transferred the lessons learned from their involvement in the project to target support for children in mathematics and on other areas. The co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need for the staff to continue to receive external support in targeting children and in using data in order to extend the good practice developed through this project into a whole-school approach to the teaching of number.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The overall school planning needs to reflect more appropriately the context in which the school is working and to provide clearer direction for classroom teachers in targeting those children who are underachieving. The school recognises that it needs to use the range of monitoring approaches including analysis of data in a more focused manner to set targets for improvement.

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified early through the teachers' observations and evaluations. The individual education plans (IEPs) identify appropriate targets with suitable success criteria which are shared and reviewed regularly with the parents. The teachers' comments reflect the progress of the children with IEPs and provide useful information to inform the planning for their further learning.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, the quality of almost all of the teaching was evaluated as good or better; the majority of the teaching observed was very good or outstanding. The teachers have embedded the Northern Ireland Curriculum into their planning and teaching. In the best practice observed, the teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches, including enjoyable and engaging practical activities which incorporated investigative and challenging tasks and good individual and small group work. In addition, the learning was paced appropriately. On a few occasions the teachers used imaginative extension activities to challenge the children's thinking, and well focused plenary sessions to summarise and extend the learning. This good practice needs to be developed more consistently across the school.

The support for children with special educational needs is provided through the teachers' detailed planning, in-class differentiated teaching and some withdrawal sessions led by the class teachers. The teachers brief the classroom assistants well on the needs of the children in their care and how they can best support their learning. The classroom assistants work effectively alongside the class teachers to support the wide range of needs of the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and, in most classes, provide prompt oral feedback to improve learning. In the best practice, effective marking promotes improvement and the children are encouraged to engage in the self-evaluation of their learning.

There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents informed about their children's progress, for example, one written report, two formal parent-teacher consultations and an open-door policy for informal consultations.

Most of the children transfer directly from the nursery provision to the primary school. The teacher in the nursery unit shares valuable information on the children's achievements with the year 1 teacher which facilitates the transition process.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

The Principal has been in post for six years and manages the school and the resources effectively. He has worked hard to promote positive working relationships with the children, staff, governors and the parents and with a range of outside agencies to support the children's learning. He is committed to the pastoral welfare of the children and the projection of the school within the community and beyond. He is ably supported in the school by the effective and hard-working Vice-principal.

The management of the school has prioritised appropriately the improvement in the overall standards in literacy and numeracy as a major objective in the school development plan. As part of the current improvement strategy the school has up-skilled the classroom assistants who work within the school to the benefit of the children. While the school has begun to examine data to this end, there needs to be a more concerted effort to bring about improvement more quickly. In recent years, the school has benefitted from a range of initiatives and projects connected to improving standards. It needs to adopt the lessons learned from their involvement and to target improvement in a more focused manner. The members of the senior management team (SMT) have the capacity to examine and use the data effectively and now must take the time to develop an agreed strategic approach.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school gives good attention to, and meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The Principal has involved the staff and the parents in the school development planning process. The recently updated school development plan (SDP) needs to reflect more strongly the context in which the school is working. It sets out a wide range of areas for development with associated action plans. The action plans need to be adjusted to link more closely to the central aim of the raising of the children's achievements in English and mathematics. They need to identify in greater

detail the steps to be taken to achieve consistency and rigour in monitoring and evaluating the progress in raising the attainment of the children and to inform the various stages in planning for continuous improvement. The Principal, SMT and governors would benefit from support from external agencies to guide them in taking forward the areas for improvement outlined in this report.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The school accommodation has been organised and resourced well to support the children's learning. In particular there are good resources for ICT and for play-based learning. The staff make excellent use of the extensive accommodation throughout the school which is attractive and welcoming and the school grounds. The school is maintained to a high standard and the children take pride in helping the teachers and support staff to maintain their school.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the supportive and inclusive ethos across the school which helps all of the children to develop their self-confidence;
- the excellent relationships between the adults and the children, and between the children when working together;
- the outstanding experiences through a stimulating play-based curriculum which the children have in the FS;
- the quality of the teaching, which was evaluated as good or better in almost all of the lessons observed and very good or outstanding in the majority of the lessons; and
- the effective support for those children with special educational needs provided through the teachers' effective planning and in-class differentiated teaching and through some withdrawal sessions led by the class teachers.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- raise the overall standards of attainment through a more strategic management approach to improvement; and
- focus the action plans within the SDP more clearly on the raising of the children's achievements.

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.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The nursery unit's planned programme offers good opportunities for learning across most areas of the curriculum.

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

- the positive, welcoming and inclusive ethos of the nursery, where the individual contributions of the children are valued;
- the high quality of the staff's interactions with the children where they spend sustained periods with groups and individuals promoting the children's language and thinking skills;
- the progress made by the children in their communication and language skills and in particular, through imaginative play;
- the systematic approach to recording and assessing the children's responses and progress where the observations inform appropriately short-term planning;
- the very good links with parents based on the variety of methods developed to share information with the parents and encourage them to become involved more fully in their children's learning; and
- the developments and use made of the outdoor play areas for the children to enjoy a broad range of learning experiences.

6.3 Area for development is the need for the staff to:

- develop further the Creative and Expressive opportunities and experiences for the children both indoors and outdoors.

6.4 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in the nursery unit is good. The nursery unit has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the nursery unit has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the nursery unit's progress on the areas for improvement.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON EARLVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT,
NEWTOWNABBEY (301-6249)**

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**	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	3	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	4	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.	38.46%
Average attendance for the previous year.	91.8%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4¾ 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	1
Trainees	2

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	19.23%
Number of written comments	1

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