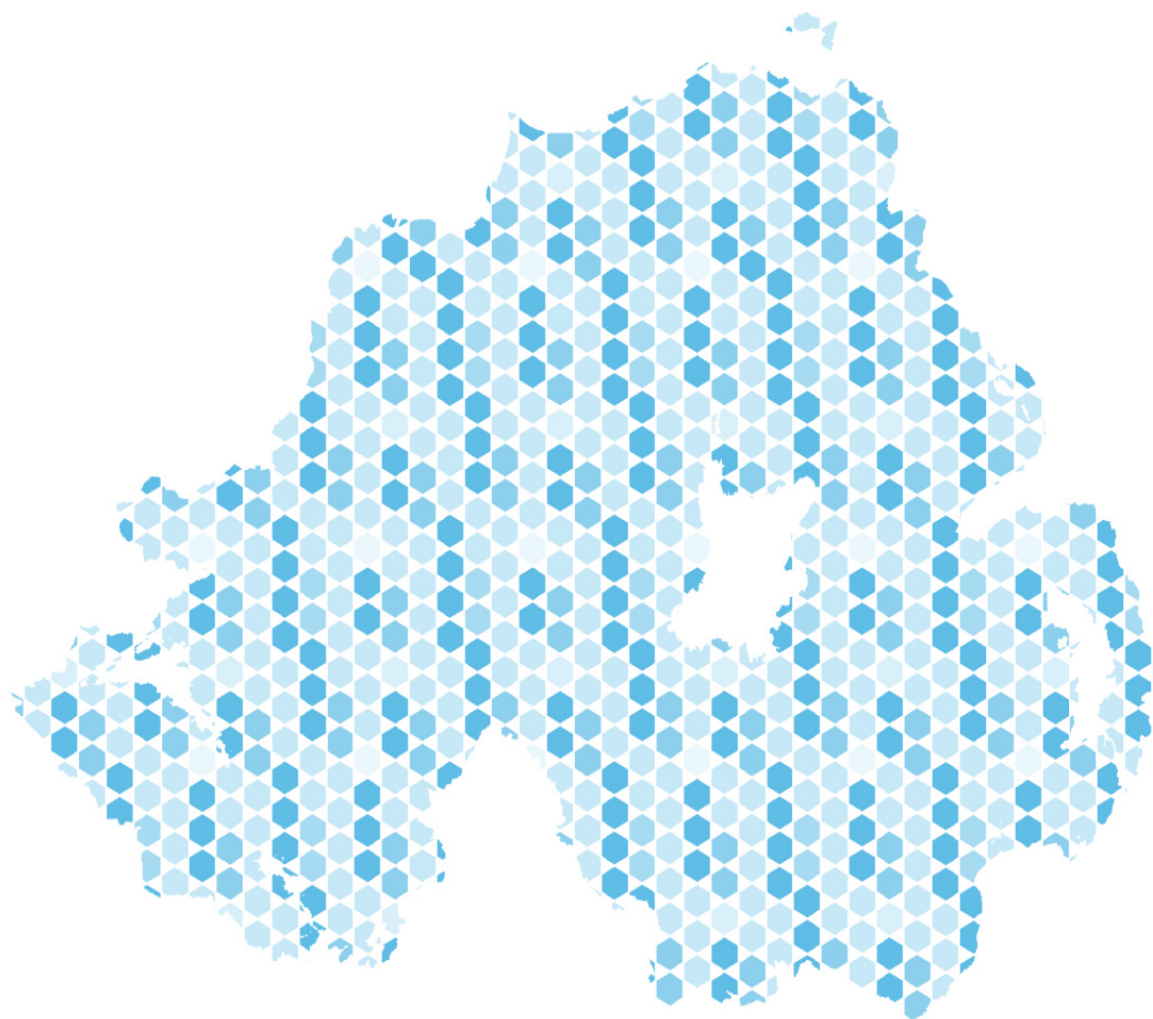


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Eden Primary School,  
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2011

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Eden Primary Carrickfergus** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 16/05/11**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-0785** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	26	28	30	28	30
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	204	200	205	209	210
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): 95.64% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- |  | Primary &<br>Reception | Nursery<br>Unit | Special<br>Unit | Irish Medium<br>Unit |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers  
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 9.9 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 21.2 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 30
- iv. Class Size (Range): 29 to 31
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 25 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 45 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 60 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 23%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 10%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10  
 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics:
- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> |
| 73.3%          | 73.3%              |

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Eden Primary School is situated on the Larne Road, Carrickfergus. The majority of the children come from within a ten mile radius of the school. The enrolment of the school has remained steady over the past three years and currently stands at 210. Approximately 10% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 23% 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, the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires 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.

One hundred and five questionnaires were issued to the parents: approximately 52% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which 30 contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses from the questionnaires reflected favourably on the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the welcoming, stimulating learning environment, the happy children who are making progress with all aspects of their development, the hard working team of teachers and assistants and the effective, approachable and professional leadership within the school.

Ten of the teaching staff and twelve members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaire; there were six written comments. All of the responses commented positively on the commitment of the staff to promoting the children's academic and personal and social development, the team approach to curriculum planning within a mutually respectful environment and the high level of support received from the Principal.

The governors expressed unanimous support for the work of the school and spoke positively about the caring, happy, inclusive ethos and of the commitment of the staff to the children. They reported that they were kept well informed by the Principal and had benefited from the opportunities to attend the school concerts, productions and from participation in the school's child protection training.

In discussions held with the year 6 children they talked openly, confidently and with great enthusiasm about their experiences in school. They value the help and support of their teachers, the additional practical resources available for literacy and numeracy and the wide ranging after-school activities. The children appreciate the introduction of the school council and they indicated that they know what to do and who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the very few concerns expressed by a small number of parents resulting from the questionnaires.

#### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding.

Among the strengths are: the contribution made by all the staff to the children to promote and maintain a supportive learning environment; the happy, exemplary behaved children who take an active role in the decision-making process within the school; the fully inclusive family assemblies; the opportunities provided for the children to have 'Talk Time' which encourage the children to talk about their feelings, and the quality of the professional relationships throughout the school.

#### 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; for example, through a successful healthy breaks initiative and the strong focus placed on participation in games and sports within the extra-curricular programme which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The children value greatly the outdoor growing area and the adventure playground.

#### 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has developed very good links with the parents and others in the local and wider community. A website has successfully been introduced which promotes the school within the community and celebrates the children's achievements; information is also shared with the parents by newsletter and by a texting service. The support of the Parent Teacher Association, local schools and external agencies is valued by the staff in enhancing the educational experiences of the children.

Very good arrangements are in place to ensure smooth transitions for the children coming from the local pre-school centre, to primary school and to the local post primary schools. The children have a number of opportunities to be visited by one another following key transitional periods.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

### **2.1 LEARNING**

The children are well-motivated and purposefully involved in their learning; they enjoy the practical activities and tasks made available to them in class and are demonstrating positive dispositions towards learning. They listen well to, and value, each other's opinions, when working collaboratively in pairs and groups, supporting and encouraging one another. Lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and there is often a sense of fun and enjoyment reflected in the activities, which encourages the children to apply themselves to the tasks.

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 independently a range of support materials and equipment provided by the teachers.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that, overall, in English and mathematics the school's performance has been consistently below the average for Northern Ireland (NI) at level 4. Compared with similar schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics at level 4 have also been below average.

Most of the children attain level 4 and above in the CCEA ICT Accreditation scheme.

The schools wide-ranging internal data demonstrates that the majority of the children are working in line with their ability and, on analysis, indicates a trend of improvement.

### **2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY**

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

The work of the literacy co-ordinator is effective. Through rigorous processes of self-evaluation he has identified appropriately key priorities for the improvement of English and literacy, for example, the implementation of new standardised testing throughout the school and the professional development programme for staff in the new guided reading scheme. At KS2 there is a need to improve the levels of attainment in literacy at the end of key stage assessments.

The children have very good talking and listening skills. Good working relationships and effective questioning by the teachers encourage most of the children to engage actively in a variety of interesting learning opportunities. They are keen to talk about their work, listen respectfully and co-operate fully during well-managed paired and group work sessions. The children display competence in, and enjoy using, ICT when calculating alphabetical order, finding countries on a world map and using 'talking books' based on favourite characters and exerts from fiction.

The teaching of guided reading is developing within the school and is taught systematically through a wide range of strategies which include suitable word recognition and a phonics programme. The school has invested recently in a guided and shared reading scheme in KS2 and in 'Big Books' for the younger children, to update provision in order to raise standards and to encourage reading for enjoyment. All of the children who are involved in the Better Reading Partnership and Guided Reading programmes make good to significant progress. By the end of year 7 most of the children read with increasing skill and fluency and achieve good standards in reading.

The children take pride in the presentation of their written work and the standards achieved are good. In the FS and KS1 the children are supported and encouraged to develop as early writers through sentence and sequencing activities and shared writing sessions. In KS2 the children are provided with a wide range of opportunities across the curricular areas to practice and refine their writing skills including: composing poetry, drafting current affairs reports, drafting questionnaires and composing historical diary inserts. The teachers have identified appropriately the need to improve the children's spelling; a more focused programme to progress spelling from years 2-7 has recently been introduced.

Information and communication technology, including the use of the interactive whiteboard, is used successfully to stimulate interest and to support writing; in years 6 and 7, the children are using the internet well for appropriate research purposes.

## 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The numeracy co-ordinator provides effective leadership. She supports her colleagues well and has a clear vision for the monitoring, evaluation and development of mathematics and numeracy within the school. Well-targeted additional in-class and withdrawal support has recently been introduced for those children who are experiencing difficulty in numeracy. There is a need to improve the levels of attainment in the end of KS2 assessments in numeracy.

In the FS numeracy is promoted through a range of well-planned play-based activities through which the children are developing early mathematical language and understanding. The children are beginning to develop their skills in mental mathematics through a series of well-paced and fun learning activities and by year 1-3, demonstrate a good understanding of number, measures and shape and space.

At KS1, the children participate with enthusiasm in and enjoy the practical elements of numeracy which help to develop their understanding of number, measures, shape, and handling data. In the best practice observed the use of skilful questioning by the teachers encouraged the children to give thoughtful and extended responses and helped broaden the children's understanding of key concepts in numeracy.

At KS2, the children participate enthusiastically in their mathematics lessons and are encouraged to make good use of the extensive mathematical resources within the school and to apply their mathematical skills across the learning areas. In discussion with children in year 4 and year 7, they spoke confidently about their mathematical experiences, and made good use of their mental maths skills in number, shape and space, measures and data handling. To improve the overall provision in numeracy the children in KS2 would benefit by having greater opportunity to extend their experiences in mathematical processes and problem-solving within the classes.

Information and communication technology is used effectively throughout the school to reinforce the children's mathematical thinking; for example, interactive whiteboards are used well to support learning and the children have good access to a range of computer software packages.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

There is very thorough and consistent planning which guides well the day-to-day work of the school including giving effective guidance to the support staff. The planning across the curriculum enables a consistent approach to preparation and provides a good structure for the lessons.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

During the inspection, the quality of the teaching observed which was always good; in nearly one half of the lessons it was very good. In the best practice, the teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches, including enjoyable and engaging practical and interactive activities, good individual, paired and group work, well focused plenary sessions and effective questioning which promoted the children's thinking skills and extended mature responses. The staff need to work consistently to develop further opportunities for the children to engage in investigative and independent learning experiences.

#### **3.3 ASSESSMENT**

The teachers mark regularly the children's written work and, in most classes, provide prompt oral feedback to improve learning. In the best practice, helpful marking promotes improvement and the children are encouraged to engage in the self-evaluation of their learning and in the assessment of their peers. There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents informed about their children's progress, for example, one annual written report and formal and informal parent-teacher consultations.

The school is developing its use of a range of standardised test scores and performance data in order to focus more sharply on the children's progress and to set appropriate targets for future development. The children are encouraged to be active in assessment for learning, for example, through evaluating both daily and monthly personal targets.

The school has identified the need to review its moderation process and the overall approach to levelling the children's work. To date the teachers have primarily focused on the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and, the more able children. While the majority of children are attaining standards in line with their abilities a more significant focus needs to be placed on the progress of those children who are underachieving. The inspection evidence confirms that this is an important area for development.

#### **3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The overall quality of provision for children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning is very good.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides effective leadership within the school. She is highly committed and well-informed and has put in place an adept system for the early identification of children who are experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning, and for those who are most able. The SENCO works closely with the staff to compile well-targeted individual and group education plans which are shared with the parents. The school works in collaboration with a number of outside agencies to further enhance the provision for those children who have been identified by the school as being in need of additional learning support.

The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all of the children by providing an inclusive and caring environment for learning. The current provision for special educational needs includes in-class and withdrawal sessions for the children, and is delivered by the class teachers and assistants, supported skilfully by two additional part-time teachers in literacy and numeracy one of whom has the responsibility of SENCO.

The teachers and assistants provide effective in-class support for the children and incorporate tasks and activities which are mostly well matched to their needs, interests and abilities, for example in writing conclusions to alternative fairy tales in literacy and in developing bar graphs in numeracy.

The children benefit purposefully from the planned withdrawal classes which integrate a range of well-chosen strategies to address gaps in their learning, to enable them to make progress and to develop confidence in their work. The staff review regularly the well-focused targets set for the children; the school's developing range of assessment data indicates that most of the children on the register are making good progress.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **4.1 LEADERSHIP**

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post for ten years and provides very good strategic leadership. He manages the school well and is supported by a highly effective Vice-principal and together they have worked collegially to promote positive working relationships with the children, staff, governors, the parents and with the wider community to support the children's learning.

There is a good quality of self-evaluation within the school and the Principal and Vice-principal have played a key role in establishing this development. Working with the key co-ordinators they monitor regularly the children's work, observe a sample of the lessons and provide supportive and professional feedback to the teachers and to the assistants.

##### **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. Appropriate areas for development which are linked closely to the central aim of raising the children's achievements in English and mathematics are included strategically.

##### **4.3 ACCOMMODATION**

The school accommodation consists of a main building which contains 6 classrooms, one mobile classroom, an assembly hall, a library, two small teaching rooms, a canteen, a computer suite and a staff room. The standard of caretaking and the school maintenance is excellent and the staff work hard to create bright and inviting classrooms and corridors with displays which celebrate the children's work.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good strategic leadership of the Principal, supported well by the highly effective Vice- principal and committed staff;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care provided for the children and the staff and the significant contribution made by the support staff to the children's learning and development;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children who demonstrate positive attitudes to learning;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was always good; in nearly one half of the lessons it was very good;
- the effective support for those children with special educational needs provided through the in-class differentiated teaching and the withdrawal sessions; and
- the developing culture of self-evaluation through the school and associated action to promote improvement.

### 5.2 The area for improvement includes the need to:

- raise the children's overall standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of KS2.

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**

- There is a damp smell in one of the small teaching rooms.
- The school requires additional storage.

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