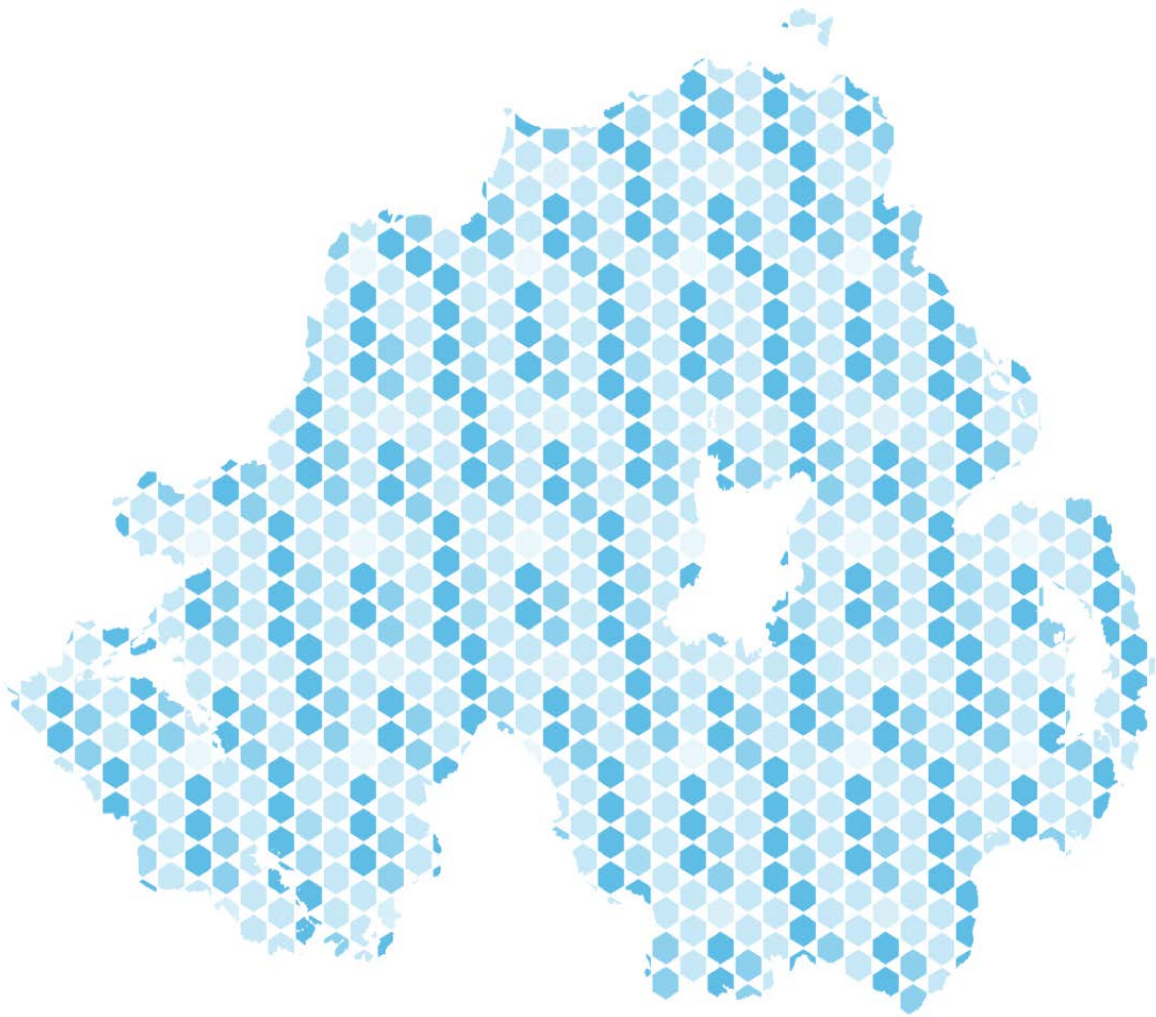


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Greystone Primary School,  
Antrim

Report of an Inspection  
in February 2013



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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## 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

Greystone Primary School is situated in Antrim town and almost all of the children come from the immediate area. The enrolment dropped two years ago to 173 but has risen since, and currently stands at 182. At the time of the inspection, 33% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 19% of the children were identified by the school as requiring support with aspects of their learning.

## 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 most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

#### Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management	Satisfactory Satisfactory Good
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### KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

## 3. Achievements and standards

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

- The children are well-motivated to learn; they settle quickly to their work and respond well to the teachers. The children's behaviour in class and in the playground is very good and they engage readily and respectfully with one another and with visitors to the school. When they are given the opportunity, the children work well collaboratively but overall, there are insufficient opportunities for the children to acquire and develop thinking skills and personal capabilities, including self-management skills.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has been consistently below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in mathematics during the same period have been below the average in two out of the four years and in line with the average in two years. In English, the children's attainments have improved steadily and have been above the average in each of the last two years.
- By the end of year 7, the majority of children achieve satisfactory standards in literacy and numeracy. Most of the children achieve good standards of reading fluency as they progress through the school and while a majority of the children can produce good quality written work, the content and the extent of the children's writing is too variable across the school. The children can discuss their work when asked to do so; they would benefit from more frequent opportunities to develop their communication skills further. By year 7, a majority of the children show a sound knowledge and understanding of most of the key aspects of the mathematics curriculum and can complete simple and more complex calculations quickly and with confidence. They are able to explain their methodology, but there is inconsistency in the level of flexibility in their mathematical thinking.
- The children who have been identified as requiring additional support with their literacy skills are making satisfactory to good progress with their learning.

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

##### **The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

- The teaching observed ranged from inadequate to very good. The teaching in around one-third of the lessons was good or very good; in almost half the lessons, it was satisfactory and in the remaining proportion, there were significant areas for improvement. In the most effective practice, the teachers hold high expectations of what the children can achieve, they develop the children's thinking and extended oral and written responses through effective questioning and opportunities to engage in meaningful paired and group work. In the less effective practice, the teaching is over-directed by the teacher, with lengthy periods of whole class teaching followed by low level tasks. Insufficient planning for differentiation to meet the range of abilities in the class leads to a lack of sufficient support and challenge. There is currently too much variation in the children's year on year progress. The teachers need to develop and implement consistently an agreed set of approaches and strategies for learning and teaching across all key stages.
- Throughout the school, the quality of the planning is satisfactory. The recently agreed format for planning is providing a useful framework to support the development of links across the curriculum and is encouraging regular evaluations of the learning and teaching. Overall, the link between planning, evaluation and assessment needs to be strengthened to enable the teachers to meet more effectively the learning needs of individual children.

- The school has made a good start to developing a whole school literacy scheme with the support of the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) Curriculum Advice and Support Service (CASS). The school has identified a number of relevant priorities for the continued development of literacy including the completion of the literacy scheme and the need for the children to develop their comprehension and higher order reading skills. The younger children are developing good letter formation skills and enjoy using the well-resourced role play areas to write within a context. However, the children would benefit from more frequent and more challenging opportunities to write independently, apply their phonic knowledge and develop their oral communication skills.
- The whole school scheme for numeracy provides detailed guidance and a clear line of progression from year 1 to year 7; this needs to be supplemented with a whole school overview across all areas of mathematics to ensure balanced coverage and continuity of skills, knowledge and understanding. In the best practice, the teachers link mathematics activities effectively to real-life contexts, they build clearly upon previous learning and develop the children's awareness of the interconnections across some of the areas of mathematics. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop the children's skills in number and in mental mathematics. This needs to be developed as a systematic, whole-school approach which includes well-planned opportunities for the children to discuss their thinking, use mathematical language and apply their mental strategies, in order to develop greater flexibility in their mathematical thinking.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is good. A strong sense of community and family atmosphere is evident throughout the school. The pastoral dimension of the school's work is guided by a comprehensive set of policies which have been informed by good levels of consultation with the parents, children, teachers and governors. The wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including those that are provided through Extended Schools funding, enhance the children's learning and their personal and social development.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. The children who require support for literacy are identified early through a combination of diagnostic testing by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and information provided by class teachers. The children respond well during the withdrawal sessions which are provided by the SENCo and trained learning support assistants. In addition, the after-school clubs which focus on literacy are motivating the children and developing their enjoyment of reading. The school liaises well with parents and with other agencies. The quality and implementation of the individual education plans is too variable across the school. The children would benefit from a wider variation of teaching approaches and more consistent affirmation and celebration of their achievements.
- The school gives good attention to healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the provision of a good range of after-school sports activities.

## 5. Leadership and management

### **The quality of leadership and management is good.**

- The senior leadership team has placed a clear focus on the need to raise the standards the children attain. The Principal has developed very effectively the school's links with the parents and wider community and has made significant progress in creating a collegial and collaborative approach to school improvement. The Vice-principal has led effectively aspects of the school development work including the introduction of systems to identify low and underachievement. There is variation in the effectiveness of those currently holding specific curricular leadership responsibilities. As the school's leadership and management structure is currently undergoing significant change, it will be important that those in leadership roles are supported and trained to lead, monitor and evaluate rigorously the developments and improvements within their curricular areas.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation are developing well to include a good level of consultation and an increasing use of internal performance data to identify appropriate priorities for improvement. The school is well-placed to use this information to track groups and individual children in order to determine trends, measure progress and effect improvements in the quality of learning and teaching across the key stages. The current school development plan places an appropriate focus on raising the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. In light of the findings of this inspection, the associated action plans need to be amended in order to bring about the required improvements.
- There are appropriate procedures, including written reports and formal consultations, to keep parents well-informed about their children's progress. In addition, the school operates an open-door policy to meetings with parents. The school has established very good links with a range of other schools and agencies to enhance the learning and personal development opportunities for the children and for their parents. The work of the parent teacher association is valued highly within the school community.
- The governors support fully the work of the Principal and the staff. They appreciate the community dimension of the school and are committed to supporting the continued improvement of the provision.
- 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. The inspectors met with a group of the year 6 and 7 children; the children talked very positively about the support and encouragement provided by the staff and they indicated that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory. The strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the children are to be met more effectively.

The key areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the roles and responsibilities of the curricular leaders and develop a more systematic and rigorous approach to monitoring, evaluating and improving the provision; and
- improve the consistency in the quality of learning and teaching in order to raise further the children's achievements and standards, particularly in numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

## 6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	152
Number of Questionnaires Returned	60
Percentage of Returns	39
Number of Comments	25

Almost all of the parental questionnaire responses were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision of the school. In particular, the parents commended the commitment and approachability of the Principal and staff, the friendly atmosphere and the school's strong community dimension. The very few concerns raised in the written comments have been discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Number of Comments	*

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	8
Number of Comments	*

\*Denotes fewer than five

In their very positive questionnaire responses, the teaching and support staff indicated that they enjoy working in the school and feel valued by the leadership team. The written responses highlighted in particular, the high level of support provided for both the children and the staff.



## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Greystone Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 25/02/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-6037** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	31	29	24	26	33
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	207	202	173	178	182
Reception	2	1	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): 94.7% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 91.5%

<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): 7.8 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 23.3 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 26
- iv. Class Size (Range): 20 to 33
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |      |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support:  | 27.5 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 22.5 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 15   |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.6%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 19.2%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 33.5%
- 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):
- |                |                    |              |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Irish</b> |
| 83.33%         | 79.17%             | N/A          |

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