

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lisnagelvin Primary School,
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection
in April 2011



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

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	4
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	6

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: Lisnagelvin Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 04/04/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 201-6203** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	73	66	80	74	87
Enrolments					
Primary	553	532	547	525	545
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	2	1
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):

95.1%

NI Avg Att: 94.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	----------------------

- D. i. Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers): 24.6 0 0 0
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 22.2 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 26
- iv. Class Size (Range): 23 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|-----|
| i. Clerical support: | 71 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 106 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 380 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 3.3%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 37.78%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 23.52%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 85.4% **Mathematics** 85.4%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lisnagelvin Primary School is situated in Richill Park in the Waterside area of Londonderry. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the local and surrounding area. The enrolment of the school has fluctuated slightly over the past five years and currently stands at 549 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 24% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and 45% were identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning; three percent have statements of educational need. The school maintains a Learning Support Class (LSC) which at the time of the inspection had only one child enrolled.

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 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.

Almost 61% of parental questionnaires from the primary school were returned to Inspection Services Branch. Eighteen returns included additional written comments. The parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision provided by the school. In particular, they acknowledged the welcoming friendly atmosphere within the school, the friendly and supportive staff, and the good communications established between the school and the parents.

Twenty-five of the teachers and 29 members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaires. Almost all of these responses were very positive and highly affirmative of the work of the school.

The small number of issues raised through the questionnaires were shared with the Principal and the governors.

The governors expressed strong support for the school. In particular they spoke of the dedicated Principal, teaching and non teaching staff, and the strong links that exist between the school, the parents and the local community.

In discussions, the children in year 6 reported that they feel safe and secure and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about their experiences in school and spoke with confidence about the friendly and helpful staff, their participation and enjoyment in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and the willingness of the teachers to listen to their points of view.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is excellent. The school provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for all of the children; there are positive working relationships and mutual respect between all of the staff and the children, and a supportive learning ethos exists throughout the school. A well-organised school council plays a much valued role in the life and work of the school, including their full involvement in a recent review of the positive behaviour policy. The wide-range of extra-curricular activities enriches the children's learning experiences and encourages the children to develop their interests. There is a very effective whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour; the year 7 'Playground Buddy' scheme promotes effectively the attitudes of sharing and responsibility.

1.5 SAFEGUARDING

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

1.6 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has excellent links with the parents and with the local and wider community. Very good communication with the parents is maintained through regular newsletters and meetings. The parents take an active role in the life and work of the school through the very active Parent Teacher Association. Effective links established with the local post-primary schools are helping to ensure that the children are supported appropriately as they transfer to the next stage of their learning. The school has established very good links with the local community, businesses, and other schools, all of which enhance the children's learning experiences.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are friendly, courteous and very well behaved. In most classes they are well motivated, demonstrate high levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning, and interact confidently with their teachers and with one another. They have good opportunities to apply their learning in a variety of meaningful contexts.

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 in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are in line with the average.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall provision for English and literacy is very good.

The teachers provide the children with a wide range of opportunities to talk about their learning and to share their opinions in pairs, groups and through whole class discussions. Most of the children demonstrate confidence and a clear understanding of the rules of group discussion. The school develops further the children's language through a well-planned drama programme which provides excellent opportunities for the children to express themselves orally. In the foundation stage (FS) the children have access to the school's Speech and Language Therapist who provides screening for speech and language difficulties and supports the staff in developing appropriate strategies to meet the children's needs.

The school has developed a literacy rich environment to support the children's learning. It promotes the enjoyment of books through a number of successful initiatives, such as the development of reading partnerships and events linked with World Book Day. The children make good use of the well-stocked class libraries. They speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books, characters and authors. The children learn to read through a well structured programme which incorporates a range of methods and reading material to meet the interests and abilities of all the children. The teachers make good use of a range of strategies including the systematic development of phonological awareness. The children read with fluency and expression and show a very good understanding of the text. By the end of KS2, most of the children are reading at a level commensurate with, or above expectations.

In the FS the teachers support well the children to develop letter formation, to write words and to express ideas in simple sentences. During play-based learning, the children have very good opportunities to mark-make and experiment with writing. In KS1 and KS2 the children develop increasing fluency in their writing. The teachers plan effectively for extended writing across a wide range of genre and across the curriculum. The children have good opportunities to write for a variety of audiences; most take great pride in their work, writing with accuracy and to a high standard. The children's work is celebrated in attractive and informative displays throughout the school.

The literacy co-ordinator has been in post for 10 years. She provides very effective curricular leadership. Through monitoring and evaluating the children's progress she has identified priorities for development and ensures that staff development is relevant and appropriate. The literacy policy provides helpful direction for the teaching approaches across the school.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

Across all key stages the children's work is displayed and celebrated, and standards of presentation are excellent. In the FS, the children are developing well their mathematical concepts, skills and language through a combination of well planned play-based activities, effective questioning by the teacher, practical mathematics lessons, games and action songs. The children are encouraged to explore and investigate, and to use their mathematical knowledge in meaningful contexts.

As the children progress through KS1 and KS2, they continue to develop their understanding in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. In most of the lessons observed, the children engage in purposeful, practical activities. The children are encouraged to talk about their work using appropriate mathematical language. They have good opportunities to apply their learning in a range of open-ended, investigative work and problem solving activities. In the less effective lessons observed, the work did not provide sufficient challenge and was not set in meaningful contexts; in these classes, a small number of the children were disengaged in their learning and insufficient progress was made.

The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are good. During discussions with the most able children in year 4, they had a good knowledge and understanding of basic number, shape and space, and data handling. They also used well mental mathematics strategies to solve basic number problems. In year 7, the most able children demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of number facts, shape and space, and data handling, with some flexibility in their mathematical thinking. By the end of KS2, most of the children achieve good standards in mathematics and are working at a level in line with, or above, expectations.

The numeracy co-ordinator has a clear and appropriate vision for the development of mathematics within the school. She supports effectively the staff in implementing the planned programme. The numeracy co-ordinator uses well the performance data to identify children who are underperforming in mathematics and analyses the data to set appropriate targets for the children. She monitors the children's learning by analysing performance data, sampling of the children's work and class visits. There is now a need to develop further the monitoring and evaluating role of the co-ordinator to ensure the information gained through the evaluations is used effectively to inform future planning on a whole-school level and is linked well with action to promote improvement.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers are dedicated and plan conscientiously their work. The medium-term planning identifies appropriately the learning outcomes for the children and the range of teaching approaches and resources to be used. In most classes the written plans are evaluated effectively by the teachers in order to inform future planning, teaching and learning for their classes; this good practice needs to be disseminated and developed across the school. The scheme of work for mathematics needs to be reviewed, and used by the teachers to focus their planning more specifically on ensuring greater progression and challenge in the children's learning.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection the quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate; over four-fifths of the teaching was good or better, with nearly one-half being very good or outstanding. Most of the lessons are well-paced and skilful questioning is used to stimulate thinking and to develop extended oral responses from the children. In these classes the teachers discuss the learning intentions and related success criteria with the children, and use these effectively as a focus for consolidation throughout the lessons. In the less effective practice the teachers need to establish and reinforce clearly articulated classroom routines and expectations in order to focus the children's attention on the teaching and on the tasks they are asked to carry out. In all classes, the teachers make

effective use of a range of ICT, including interactive games, websites and programmable devices to support learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy. All the classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards and both the teachers and the children use them confidently and proficiently. The classroom assistants make a very significant contribution to the effective teaching and learning throughout the school.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school is developing well its processes for the collation and analysis of performance data. Recent changes to the procedures for the administration and marking of standardised tests has helped to improve the reliability of the data. Rigorous analysis of the performance data is undertaken by the assessment team and the class teachers to identify and make provision for any children at risk of underachieving. Assessment procedures identify clearly the progress and development of each child and are used to set well focused, individual targets and action plans to meet each child's learning needs. The principal, along with the assessment team has identified appropriately the need to use this performance data more effectively to inform the setting of whole-school targets for improvement in aspects of literacy and numeracy.

There are effective procedures in place for keeping parents informed about their children's learning and progress. An annual written report is sent to parents and formal parent teacher consultations are held twice yearly. The reports are of a very good quality; they indicate clearly to parents the children's progress and strengths, highlighting key areas for further development. In addition, opportunities are provided throughout the year for parents to meet with teachers as the need arises.

A marking policy gives appropriate guidance to teachers and ensures consistency in marking across all key stages. The teachers mark regularly and conscientiously the children's work; they add supportive, appreciative comments and, in nearly all the classes, indicate to the children how their work can be improved. The children are also encouraged through self and peer assessment to reflect upon and improve the quality of their work and to evaluate the work of others.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Overall the provision for special educational needs (SEN) is good. The children who require additional support with their learning are identified appropriately at an early stage through the teachers' observations, diagnostic tests and the analysis of standardised assessment data. In the FS there is a strong emphasis on developing the children's language and communication abilities. The highly experienced special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is dedicated to the children in her care and provides helpful advice and encouragement to support the work of the classroom teachers. In-class and withdrawal support is provided in both literacy and numeracy. In most classes, sharply focused, individual pupil action plans guide effectively the teaching and learning. In the withdrawal sessions, the children participate well in the learning tasks and receive praise and encouragement for their efforts. In planning for the withdrawal sessions the teachers need to take greater cognisance of the learning needs of each child and develop further the range of intervention strategies used. They need also to plan co-operatively with the class teachers to ensure that the work covered in these sessions supports, complements and consolidates the good work the children are doing in class.

The children who receive additional support with their learning make good progress. By the end of year 7, the majority are achieving standards in literacy and numeracy which are in line with expectations.

3.5 LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS

The LSC opened in September 2010 to provide specialist support for pupils with statements of special educational needs relating to moderate learning and associated difficulties; pupils are referred to the LSC by the Western Education and Library Board. It makes provision currently for one pupil whose needs are being met appropriately in one-to-one teaching sessions and through small group and mainstream class participation. Until the LSC numbers increase, it is appropriate that the school redeploys the resource and experience of the teacher and the assistant to address the needs of other pupils within the school who would benefit from the additional support with their learning.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management in this school is very good. The Principal provides very effective strategic and pastoral leadership and has an appropriate vision for the ongoing development of the school. He sets a positive tone for the working of the school through his excellent working relations and open channels of communication with the children, parents and staff. He is highly committed to raising further the standards of education for all the children. He is supported very effectively by the Vice-principal and senior management team (SMT). The school now needs to develop further the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning, in order to identify more strategically the key priorities for whole-school development.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

A collegial approach to school development planning has been established. The Principal has carried out extensive consultation with the parents, teachers, support staff and the children; the outcomes from these consultations, together with information gained from the analysis of the school's internal data, have been used to inform planning for the school's development. The school gives very good attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans (SDP) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors make very positive contributions to the life and work of the school, and support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. They attend training regularly and ensure that all aspects of school life are kept under review.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the strong family and community ethos within the school, which is exemplified through the excellent behaviour of the children and their positive attitudes to their learning;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care provision for the entire school community;
- the standards achieved by most of the children by the end of KS2, which are good in numeracy and very good in literacy;

- the hard-working and dedicated teaching and support staff who co-operate effectively to promote the welfare of the children;
- the quality of the teaching observed, which was very good or outstanding in almost one-half of the lessons; and
- the very effective leadership of the Principal in the management of change in the school, with the effective support of the Vice-principal and SMT.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to develop further:

- the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision in order to identify more precisely the key priorities for whole-school development; and
- the whole school planning for special educational needs provision, in order to improve the coherence of all elements of the support programme and to ensure the interventions are tailored to the individual needs of the children.

5.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

