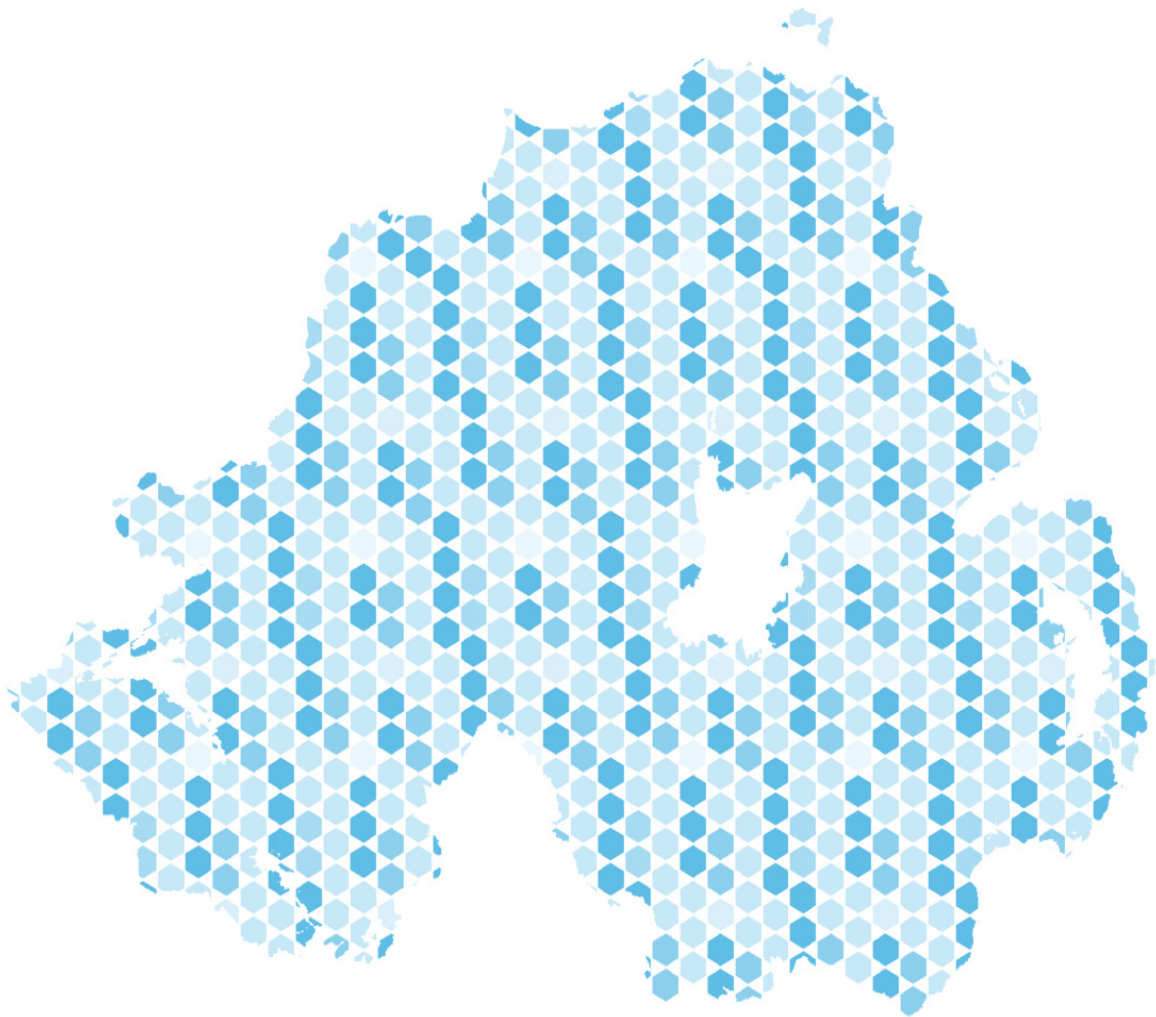


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Millstrand Integrated Primary
School and Nursery Unit,
Portrush

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: Millstrand Integrated Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 27/02/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 306-6544** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	23	29	24	24	25
Enrolments					
Primary	165	163	164	165	164
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	26	26	26	26	26
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: 92.21%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 8 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.37 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 23.28
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|--------|
| i. Clerical support: | 40 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 43.25 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 130.50 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 30.48%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 28.22%
- 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 | 70.58% | Mathematics | 76.47% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------|-----|

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Millstrand Integrated Primary School is situated on the west side of Portrush. The children come from a wide surrounding area, including the towns of Portrush and Portstewart. Over the past five years, the school has maintained its enrolment well and the current number of children attending the school is 190. Just over 28% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 30% of its children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. There is a nursery unit situated within the school building and offers 26 full-time places; currently all of the children are in their final pre-school year.

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 the 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.

One hundred and sixty-seven questionnaires were issued to the parents; approximately 28% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which 21 contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. The parents appreciated the care and attention shown for the children's welfare by the dedicated and approachable staff.

Twenty-six questionnaires were issued to the parents of children in the nursery unit; approximately 58% were returned to ISB, including nine which contained additional written comments. The parental returns indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the provision. All the written comments praised the quality of the provision and the parents valued the work of the dedicated staff, which they felt developed the children's confidence and social skills.

The governors expressed positive support for the work of the school. In particular, they drew attention to how well the school's inclusive ethos supports the children's diverse range of needs and they talked with pride about the children's wide range of achievements and their positive dispositions to learning.

The children in year 6 spoke very positively of their experiences at school, in particular, their access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and their enjoyment of learning. The children indicated that they knew what to do and who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their safety and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the views emerging from the parents', teachers' and support staff questionnaires, including a small number of concerns that were made in relation to pastoral issues, communication and pick-up arrangements at the end of the school day.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery unit and in the primary school is very good. In the nursery unit, there is a very happy and caring atmosphere, which develops very well the children's personal, social and emotional well-being. The children in the primary school are well cared for and the staff know the children and their circumstances well.

The staff work well to provide an appealing and child-friendly environment to support learning both inside the school and in the school grounds. The children's work and achievements are celebrated through attractive displays in the classrooms and corridors. The teachers have appropriately high expectations and the school is committed to raising standards further. The staff promote the children's self-esteem and confidence well and acknowledge their wider achievements. There is a sound commitment to inclusion, which is reflected in the very good support for the children with special educational needs (SEN). The school's arrangements for the pastoral care of the children is led well by the long-serving Vice-principal, whose experience and commitment to integrated education is reflected well in this work.

The school has placed appropriate emphasis on developing an effective rewards and positive behaviour system and the children benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which develop their social skills and confidence. There are at present insufficient opportunities for the children to be involved in decision making processes and it is appropriate that the school has planned to develop a school council to address this need.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). The school needs to ensure that all members of staff have received appropriate child protection training, including where it is of a refresher nature.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating. The children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through eating nutritious foods at break and lunch time. There is a good variety of after-school sporting activities on offer which provides the children with important additional physical development experiences.

1.7 LINKS WITH THE PARENTS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The school and the nursery unit have established good links with the parents and the wider community. The children's learning experiences are enhanced by a range of educational visits, visitors to the school and creative collaborations with the local theatre. In addition, the school makes excellent use of local and natural resources and the appealing extra-curricular provision includes surfing, golfing and outdoor pursuits. The school maintains links with neighbouring schools, most recently through the 'Creative Change' project and also the good work in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in conjunction with the

University of Ulster. The school has largely effective arrangements for communicating with the parents including the website, weekly newsletters and a texting service. The Parents' Council gives very good support to school events and provides additional resources to broaden the children's learning opportunities. It is appropriate that the school has recognised the need to consult with parents more pro-actively for their views on the life and work of the school, in order to benefit further the children's educational and pastoral experiences.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are friendly, confident and respond well to activities which challenge and extend their thinking and learning. They have a good disposition towards learning and are able to demonstrate good self-management skills and can engage enthusiastically. When given the opportunity, they are reflective in their learning and can work very well in pairs and in groups. The children who need additional support benefit from good quality withdrawal sessions and one-to-one assistance. They work well alongside their peers in class and have good levels of confidence. They make good progress in meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans (IEP).

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 has been below the Northern Ireland (NI) average and the average for similar schools in the same free school meals category for two of those years. In both English and mathematics, the outcomes were well above the NI and FSM benchmarks in one of these years and in or around the FSM average in the remaining year. This fluctuation is a reflection of the diverse range of ability in different year groups within the school.

The Principal has identified appropriately the need to improve standards further and has implemented a range of strategies to raise levels of attainment in English and mathematics.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The school has, appropriately, prioritised the development of particular areas of literacy in the School Development Plan (SDP) and devised associated action plans. The literacy policy, which is currently under review, guides the work in literacy and promotes the development of the core skills of talking and listening, reading and writing.

Across the key stages almost all of the children have very good oral communication skills and speak confidently to peers, teachers and other adults. In many of the lessons observed, the children listened empathetically to others and gave thoughtful and extended verbal responses.

The majority of the children achieve good standards in reading and can read with fluency and understanding. The children are taught to read systematically through the use of commercial reading schemes which are enhanced by a wide range of appropriate support materials including novels, 'big books' and software programs. The teachers create a literacy-rich environment in which reading is promoted positively through initiatives such as visiting writers, timetabled silent reading time and a book club for the children in years 4 to 6 which cultivates further a love of reading.

The standard of written work achieved by the children is good and is celebrated in attractive displays throughout the school. In the foundation stage (FS), the children become familiar with different forms of print and experiment with informal writing. The children's letter formation, word-building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure are developed through shared writing activities. Across the key stages the children experience a wide variety of writing activities across a range of genres; their skills are developed further through participation in competitions and an after school story writing club. The children in year 6 have written and produced entertaining stories for the younger the children in KS1.

The children benefit from their engagement with ICT and their literacy skills are developed further through the use of voice recorders, digital cameras and film editing software.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is good

The school's programme for mathematics is suitably broad covering the key elements of number, shape and space, measurement, data handling and processes. As the children progress through the school, they are provided with a wide variety of strategies and resources which ensures they acquire a sound understanding in mathematics. This programme is under continual review, and the staff is well aware of the further development it needs to undertake to ensure the programme provides for fuller coherence and progression in the children's learning.

The children's experiences and learning in mathematics and science have been enhanced significantly through the school's involvement in a STEM initiative. The children's active participation in a longitudinal study of rock pools showed them at first hand the relevance of science and mathematics to every day life. It is commendable that every child in the school was involved in this initiative which incorporated strong elements of connected learning across the curriculum for them, and the school's involvement was recognised through its success in both provincial and national competitions.

Through an effective self-evaluation of the provision and outcomes in mental mathematics, the school identified the need to raise further the children's skills in this area. Consequently, all mathematics lessons now incorporate a session focused on mental mathematics. This has raised appropriately the importance of this element and through good use of suitable approaches, effective oral questioning and appropriate ICT programs, the children's mental mathematical skills are improving. The children's understanding could be developed further through giving them more opportunities to explain in their own words the processes they use to arrive at an answer.

By the end of KS 2, most of the children attain good standards in their mathematics. They show good flexibility in their mental processes, have a sound understanding of place value, can estimate using metric measurement and know well the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. The children report that they enjoy mathematics because of the practical manner in which it is provided and the support they are given by their teachers to help them deal with any difficulties.

The development of mathematics in the school has been led soundly by the co-ordinator. Appropriate areas for development have been identified and approaches introduced to address them. There is a clear vision within the school involving the co-ordinator and senior management of what needs to be done to improve the quality of learning and teaching in mathematics, including the further development of monitoring and evaluating processes.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers prepare well for lessons and their short-term and medium-term plans are comprehensive. The planning across the curriculum provides an effective framework for progression and helps to ensure coherence in the children's learning. The teachers evaluate their planning regularly. In the best practice, these evaluations are focused on the needs of groups and individuals within the class and are used effectively to inform future planning to meet the requirements of all the children.

There are good links made between the teachers' planning and the support for the children who require additional help. There is effective communication between the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the class teachers which leads to early and effective intervention and ensures an appropriate support programme is planned for and put in place. The quality of the children's IEPs is good.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory with almost all of the teaching being good or very good in almost equal measure. In the best practice observed, the teachers have high expectations and they use skilful questioning to extend the children's thinking and responses. The teachers are very hard working and committed. They make meaningful links with the children's prior learning and use well-planned activities and resources to develop the children's understanding and optimise opportunities to exploit incidental learning.

In the few instances where the teaching was less effective, there were insufficient opportunities for the children to be active in their learning.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school is developing well its assessment processes at whole-school, year group and individual levels. Consequently, all the teachers, including the Principal, have a thorough knowledge of the ability and attainment of each child. The outcomes of performance data are analysed effectively to inform and improve the quality of learning and teaching. The work is being developed by the assessment co-ordinator who brings sound experience, expertise and enthusiasm to the task.

The teachers report the progress and attainment of the children to the parents on a regular basis. Throughout the year, two parent-teacher consultations afford the opportunity for detailed discussions on each child's strengths and what can be done to address any concerns. The parents are provided with an annual written report which gives comprehensive information on the children's progress across the curriculum, their attitudes and dispositions to learning, and areas for the children's further development.

The children's work is corrected and annotated positively by the teachers. The school has undertaken staff development in assessment for learning strategies and the outworking of this can be seen in: the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria with the children; the use of plenary sessions to consolidate learning; and in elements of peer assessment which indicate to the children how their work can be improved.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The school identifies well, and at an early stage, the children who would benefit from additional support with aspects of their learning. A recent focus, under the guidance of the SENCO, has been the further development of the IEPs; these plans outline clearly identified targets and appropriate strategies for achieving them. The school's performance data and the outcomes from the IEPs demonstrate that the children with SEN are making good progress in their learning and are achieving in line with their ability.

The recently appointed SENCO is highly committed to establishing and maintaining high quality provision for SEN throughout the school. She works closely with a range of external support agencies and has identified key areas for development in SEN, including a review of current policy and practice.

The literacy withdrawal intervention is helping those children who attend to develop positive attitudes to their learning, to increase their confidence and to raise their achievements in literacy. Significant progress in reading is being made by those children who are supported by the 'Reading Partners' programme.

Support for the children with SEN is provided through a combination of withdrawal and in-class support. The withdrawal sessions, currently only in literacy, are of a high quality, and are based on a sound knowledge of the children's needs. The SEN classroom assistant, who provides the literacy withdrawal programme, works in close collaboration with the SENCO and the class teachers to plan for and to evaluate the quality of this support. The classroom assistants support the teachers well in helping to address the needs of the children with SEN, when given clear guidance by the teacher.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post for just over eight years and provides very good leadership and management. He knows well the children, their families and the community they come from. He maintains a clear overview of development work to bring about whole-school improvement, and is supporting and building the capacity of the teachers as effective co-ordinators. He values well the commitment and skills of all the staff and is very knowledgeable, supportive and appreciative of their contributions.

All of the teachers have responsibility for the co-ordination of significant curricular areas. They are suitably experienced and committed and would benefit further from a clearer definition of their roles and responsibilities.

The recently constituted Board of Governors (governors) is committed and professional in approach. The governors have worked diligently with the Principal over the last year to improve communication with the parents, increase the range of extra-curricular activities provided for the children and to raise the profile of the school in the local community. They are exercising actively their challenge function with the Principal and have indicated their willingness to support him in addressing the areas for improvement identified in this inspection.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school development plan does not meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. It is appropriate that the school is working towards a more fully consultative, evaluative and compliant plan. The Principal is committed to embedding a culture of self-evaluation leading to continual improvement and has made excellent progress in using performance data to inform and improve learning and teaching.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The school makes good use of its accommodation. The quality of caretaking is very good and the school and its grounds are well maintained.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors carry out their governance role with endeavour and conviction. They are provided with sound information by the Principal and co-ordinators to help them in this task. They are continuing to develop their monitoring and evaluating roles and demonstrate clearly their commitment to development and improvement of the school and its place in the community.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the well motivated and courteous children who are positively disposed to learning;
- the quality of the teaching observed, almost all of which was good or better;
- the good standards achieved by most of the children in English and mathematics;
- the very good quality of the pastoral care for the children, including the good quality of the provision for the children who have special educational needs;
- the very good leadership and management provided by the Principal, coupled with the complementary governance procedures of the governors; and
- the very good quality of links and partnerships established with the local and wider community, which benefit the children.

5.2 The area for improvement is the need to:

- review and develop further the quality of internal and external communication, including clarifying further the roles and responsibilities of all post-holders.

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 an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

- There is a caring, friendly ethos in the nursery unit, where the children persevere and engage well in their play activities. The children are very well behaved; they respond well to the staff's expectations and co-operate well with one another.
- The staff provides the children with a wide range of appropriate activities and there are good opportunities for play in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. A key strength of the provision is the emphasis placed on the World Around Us and the many opportunities to explore the natural world, both inside the play room and in the outdoor play area.
- There are many good examples of purposeful discussions held between the children and the staff to extend the children's language and to develop their thinking. The outdoor play area is very attractive, with many interesting aspects to enhance and develop the children's learning experiences. The staff needs to ensure that the opportunities for good quality interactions with the children are optimised, particularly during the outdoor play sessions.
- The written planning for the nursery class is detailed and comprehensive, and is evaluated regularly, taking account of the children's responses to the play activities to guide further planning.
- The staff monitors and records well the children's progress and development, including those children identified as having additional needs.
- The teacher has a clear vision for developing the work of the nursery class. The staff works hard, and is fully committed to the education and welfare of the children.

6.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the staff to identify and implement all the opportunities to develop effective interactions with the children; and
- for a smooth transition from one activity to another in order that all the available time is used effectively in developing the children's learning.

6.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by 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 Inspectorate will monitor the nursery unit's progress on the areas for improvement.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON MILLSTRAND INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL
NURSERY UNIT, PORTRUSH**

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 special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	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.	0%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ****	
Students	1
Trainees	1

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	58%
Number of written comments	9

ACCOMMODATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The arrangements for the supervision of and the setting-down and picking-up of the children outside the school entrance need reviewed to provide greater safety and security.

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