

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Seaview Primary School,  
Glenarm

Report of an Inspection  
in November 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: Seaview Primary Glenarm** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 14/11/11**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 303-0899** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	7	9	6	6	7
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	80	68	63	57	51
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): 94.7% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 92.9%
- |  | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 3.4      0      0      0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15      NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 7.3
- iv. Class Size (Range): 6 to 9
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |      |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support:  | 15   |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 22.5 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 80   |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 7.8%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 23.5%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 16%
- 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> |
|  | 84.6%          | 69.2%              | N/A          |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Seaview Primary School is a co-educational maintained primary school situated in the village of Glenarm. Most of the children come from the surrounding rural area, within a ten mile radius of the school. The enrolment has declined steadily over the past five years and currently stands at 51. The school has identified just over 23% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Approximately 16% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

### 1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care including child protection, were evaluated.

### 1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and the children from year 6.

Thirty-three questionnaires were issued to the parents of the children; ten (30%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch. The responses from the questionnaires returned were highly affirmative.

An online questionnaire was made available to the teachers and the support staff. A majority of these responses were wholly positive, indicating strong support for the work and life of the school.

The governors feel that they are informed very well about, and expressed their high regard for, the work of the school; in particular, they praised the Principal for her leadership, and all of the staff for their commitment to the school. They also drew attention to the positive role the school plays in the local community.

The children in year 6 spoke positively about the caring and friendly atmosphere within the school, their enjoyment of practical subjects and physical activity, and acknowledged the support they receive from their teachers. They reported that they feel safe, and know whom to turn to in the event of a concern.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the findings from the questionnaires.

## 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are: the very caring and inclusive ethos; the friendly, courteous and well-behaved children; the very good working relationships between the staff and the children; the positive reward system which places a high value on the children's efforts and personal achievements; the development of the children's self-esteem and confidence, and the celebration of their work; the children's participation in a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme; and the 'House System' through which the children's views about school life are sought and valued.

## 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education; however, there is no agreed policy and written guidance for staff on the management of aspects of the children's personal care.

## 1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating through the involvement in a healthy eating programme and the healthy break scheme.

## 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school gives a high priority to maintaining a wide range of productive links with the parents and the local community. The children's learning experiences are enhanced through a cross-community partnership with the local primary schools through the Primary Integrating Enriching Education project. There are also effective links with other local schools which broaden the children's extra-curricular opportunities. The parents are kept well-informed about the work and life of the school through regular newsletters.

## 2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 2.1 LEARNING

The children are highly motivated, respectful and participate enthusiastically in their learning. They work well together in groups and pairs. When given appropriate opportunities to think and reflect, the children give considered and extended responses. Almost all of the children identified as having additional needs progress well in their learning and meet the targets set out in their individual education plans (IEPs).

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that: in English, the school's performance has varied from below to well above, and is broadly in line with, the average for Northern Ireland (NI) and similar schools in the same free school meals category; and in mathematics, overall there has been a downward trend in the children's levels of attainment which have fluctuated between above and well below average<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> the key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

## 2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision of English and literacy is good.

Most of the children have good oral communication skills and their talking and listening skills are promoted effectively in a majority of the classes. In the foundation stage (FS) and in lower KS1, there are not enough opportunities to promote the children's language skills, particularly during play-based learning. In upper KS1 and in KS2, the children form and express their opinions through paired and small group work activities that are often linked closely to their reading. In the best practice, the teachers provide regular opportunities to develop the children's spoken language, thinking skills and confidence.

A majority of the children achieve good standards in reading. The teachers use a range of effective approaches to develop early reading skills with the younger children; for example, a recently introduced phonics programme, shared and guided reading opportunities, and the use of ICT. Novels are used well at the end of KS1 and throughout KS2 to develop further the children's reading. The teachers have begun to monitor closely the children's progress in developing their reading skills, and to identify intervention strategies for children who are under-performing. The children enjoy reading and are developing a good range of appropriate strategies to help them interpret unfamiliar texts. By KS2, a majority of the children can read with fluency, confidence, expression and understanding at a level which is appropriate for their age.

The overall standard of the children's writing across the school is good. The literacy co-ordinator has identified appropriately the need to develop systematically the children's writing across the range of genres. In the FS, the children develop letter formation and word-building skills through simple recording, worksheets and shared writing activities. By the end of the FS, a significant minority of the children can use their phonological knowledge to write independently. As they progress across KS1 and KS2, the children use dictionaries and thesauri in order to become increasingly independent and accurate writers. They have opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes across the curriculum. However, there are insufficient opportunities for extended writing. Most of the teachers need to provide the children with a wider range writing activities that are matched more appropriately to their ability, in order to improve standards of writing.

Information and communication technology is used well to support learning and to refine the presentation of the children's work. In KS2, the children use the internet effectively for independent research purposes.

## 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

In the FS, the children have a satisfactory understanding of simple number bonds, can order numbers, and can sort data using Carroll diagrams. The children make accurate use of early mathematical language.

In KS1, a majority of the children are able to explain their work. In discussions with the children, the most able spoke positively about their mathematical experiences. They have a good understanding of number, including basic fractions, and of time and length. They can also use an appropriate range of mental mathematics strategies for basic addition and subtraction.

In discussions with year 7, the more able children have a satisfactory understanding of place value, table facts, measures, and shape and space; however, their ability to estimate, use a suitable range of mental mathematics strategies, think flexibly and use mathematics in meaningful real-life contexts is not developed sufficiently. Across KS2, there is insufficient progression in the children's acquisition of skills and knowledge in numeracy, and the overall standards that the children achieve are not high enough.

In a majority of the classes, there is a lack of breadth in the taught curriculum and the level of challenge for the more able children is too low. The teachers need to promote and develop greater flexibility in the children's mathematical thinking through, for example, providing more opportunities for them to engage in investigative and problem solving work.

The numeracy co-ordinator is developing the long-term planning and has introduced schemes for number, shape and space, measures, and handling data in order to ensure greater continuity in the children's learning across the mathematics curriculum. The inspection findings confirm that this is an important area for ongoing development.

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

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The teachers prepare conscientiously for lessons. They are currently reviewing appropriately the medium-term planning and developing the 'world around us' area of learning through thematic planning. In the best practice, the teacher's short-term planning takes cognisance of the ability of the children within the composite class, and the evaluations are used effectively to inform future planning for learning. This practice needs to be developed more consistently throughout the school.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from very good to inadequate; a majority was good or very good, and a significant minority of the lessons had important areas for improvement.

In the more effective practice: the learning intentions were clear and the lesson was well-structured; the level of challenge was appropriately high; the management of learning promoted the children's independence; the teachers' questions were effective; the children's own experiences were built upon successfully; and there was an appropriate review of learning. Throughout the school, in the less effective practice: the pace was too slow; the learning was not tailored closely enough to the ability of all of the children; and the plenary did not consolidate effectively the learning. In these lessons, not all of the children achieved the outcomes of which they were capable. In the FS and lower KS1, there was insufficient progression in learning, and the purpose and expected learning during the children's play-based learning sessions was not clear enough.

#### **3.3 ASSESSMENT**

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and, in the best practice, provided evaluative comments on what the children need to do in order to improve their work further. The assessment co-ordinator has conducted recently an audit of assessment for learning and identified appropriate areas for development; including developing further the use of success criteria and effective questioning.



Although the effective use of available data to inform learning and teaching is at an early stage of development, very good progress has been made recently. Assessment data has been collated centrally, and the school has begun to set targets for, and track the progress of, individual children. Furthermore, the analysis of the collated data has informed appropriately the identification of important areas for improvement in literacy. In developing further this work, it is important that the available data is used to raise the teachers' expectations of what the children can achieve, and to identify children who are underachieving and the actions necessary to help them improve.

The children's achievements and standards are reported to the parents regularly through an annual written report, a formal parent-teacher meeting, and informal contacts between teachers and parents as the need arises. The annual written reports provide the parents with a broad and holistic evaluation of their children's progress and attainment.

### **3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is highly committed to the children in her care. She supports effectively the class teachers to identify early those children who require additional support with their learning through, for example, observations of the children in class and the use of standardised assessment tests. The class teachers, in consultation with the SENCO, write the IEPs for the children with special educational needs. A majority of the IEPs outline appropriate targets which reflect the needs of the each child; these targets are focused appropriately on promoting further improvements in the children's learning. The teachers monitor closely the progress of the children in meeting their targets. The parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress through regular updates from the teachers; this is a strength of the SEN provision.

In the majority of classes, the children with language, social and learning difficulties benefit from well-focused in-class support provided by the teachers and the classroom assistants. There are occasions, however, where a small number of the younger children become disengaged and require more individualised and focused support; the current programme is not meeting sufficiently their individual needs. Although the staff have received professional development on a range of SEN issues, it is important that relevant training opportunities in SEN are reviewed regularly to ensure the needs of all the children are met fully.

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 LEADERSHIP**

The overall quality of leadership and management good.

The Principal has been in post since 2006. Over the past five years she has led successfully the staff in developing the necessary policies and procedures to guide the work of the school. She works hard to maintain the role, and sustain the presence, of the school in the local community, and knows the children and their families well. She is supported by a team of effective co-ordinators. The Principal and staff give a high priority to the pastoral care and welfare of all of the children. Owing to the size and context of the school, the co-ordinators have multiple roles and responsibilities. The roles have, however, been reviewed recently and are clearly defined. There is very good internal communication, and a strong sense of openness and collegiality within the school.

## 4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's process for improvement has many strengths; it is linked clearly to a well-constructed school development plan (SDP) that complies fully with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. The governors are well-informed about, and maintain a strategic overview of, the school's improvement agenda. They are involved actively, and support effectively the Principal and the staff, in the SDP process. There are very good opportunities for consultation about the SDP within the school community. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation within the school. Although some important areas for development have been identified, a higher priority needs to be given to raising standards in numeracy.

The Principal and the co-ordinators lead effectively the development work across key areas of the curriculum, and demonstrate a commitment to action planning and school improvement. A range of appropriate strategies have been identified to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. The Principal, with the support of the co-ordinators, now need to implement these strategies, with a clear focus on identifying the actions necessary to bring about improvement and raise standards.

## 4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

There is an effective staff development programme that is linked appropriately to the SDP priorities.

## 4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The overall quality of the accommodation is very good. Issues relating to health and safety are detailed in Appendix 1.

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the motivated, respectful children who participate enthusiastically in their learning and work well together;
- the good or very good teaching observed in a majority of the lessons during the inspection;
- the very good pastoral care and support provided for the children by the staff;
- the wide range of productive links with the parents, the local community and schools which enhance the quality of the children's learning experiences; and
- the commitment of the Principal and the co-ordinators, supported effectively by the governors, to the school improvement agenda.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- to raise the standards that the children achieve, particularly in numeracy;
- to match the work more closely to the ability of all of the children and increase the level of challenge for the more able; and

- to review the provision for the children in the FS and lower KS1 and improve the quality of their play-based learning.

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.

It is important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Some of the floor tiles in the canteen are broken, or are becoming loose, and are a health and safety hazard.
- Access to the school play ground needs to be reviewed to ensure the safety of the children at all times.

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