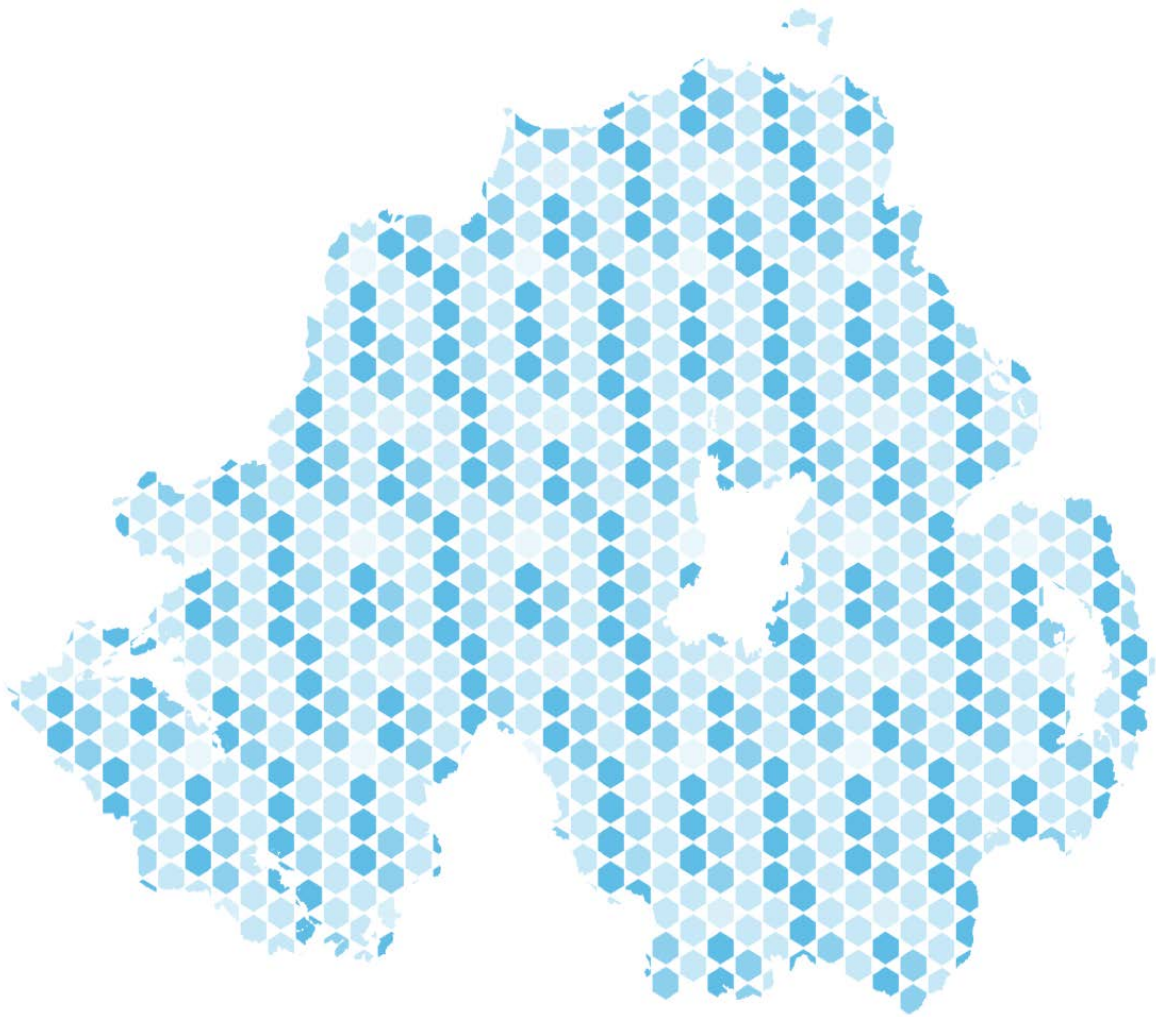


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Francis of Assisi Primary
School, Keady

Report of an Inspection
in April 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

St Francis of Assisi Primary School is situated in the village of Keady, County Armagh. Most of the children who attend the school live in the surrounding rural area. The school's enrolment has decreased over the last four years from 182 in 2009 and currently stands at 170. Ten reception age children are enrolled in the year 1 class. At the time of the inspection, approximately 50% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 22% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school has experienced a number of staff changes in recent years; the retirement of long-serving members of staff, and the appointment of a new Principal in September 2010.

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, including the arrangements for child protection.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, 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 learning and teaching and in 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	Satisfactory
Quality of provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and management	Good

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 their teachers. A majority of the younger children, including the reception children, can play collaboratively and with increasing independence. When they are given the opportunity, the children cooperate well with their peers but they need more consistent opportunities to acquire and develop thinking skills and personal capabilities, including self-management skills.

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English, the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two of the four years. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English are above or in line with the average in three of the four years. During the same four year period, the school's performance in mathematics is below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in mathematics are below the average in three of the four years. The school's internal data indicates that by the end of KS2 most of the children are achieving standards in English and in mathematics that are in line with their ability or above expectation.
- By the end of year 7, a majority of the children achieve good standards in literacy and satisfactory standards in numeracy although there is some variation in their year on year progress. A majority of the children in years 4 and 7 read fluently and with expression and have an interest and enjoyment in reading. By the end of KS2 a majority of the children are reading and writing at a good level but a significant minority of children are not and for them the attainment needs to be improved. In mathematics the children demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of most of the areas of the mathematics curriculum. There is, however, some inconsistency in the level of flexibility in the children's mathematical thinking: they rely on a limited range of strategies and are hesitant when explaining their method of calculation.
- Most of the children identified with special educational needs (SEN) in the school are making good progress in all aspects of their learning and personal development both in relation to their identified needs and in line with their ability.
- The children in year 7 and more recently year 4 are entered for the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accreditation Scheme. By the end of KS2 most of the children entered achieve levels of attainment in line with the NI average.

4. **Provision for learning**

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

- The agreed medium-term format for planning is promoting the development of links across the curriculum; the current evaluations of the planning, whilst regular, need to be more sharply focused on the quality and extent of the children's learning. The assessment for learning and strategies to encourage the children to reflect on and improve the quality of their work are at an early stage of development. Overall, the quality of and the links made between planning, evaluation and assessment need to be strengthened further to enable the teachers to meet more effectively the needs of all the children.
- The teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. In just over one-half of the lessons the teaching was good or very good: in the remaining proportion, there were areas for improvement. In the most effective practice, the teachers have high expectations for what the children can achieve, they develop the children's reasoning through effective questioning and provide good opportunities for the children to engage in meaningful paired and group work. In

the less effective practice, the teaching lacks sufficient pace and is over-directed, insufficient account is taken of the range of individual learning needs within the class and opportunities to develop the children's oral language and thinking skills are missed. In order to bring about steady progress in the children's learning, the teachers need to develop an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching, specifically in relation to differentiation and progression in the children's learning.

- The school makes careful use of the Southern Education and Library Board's (SELB) frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy to plan the overall provision and the teachers have also begun to make good use of the school's internal performance data to identify those children who are under-achieving in literacy and numeracy and to prioritise areas for improvement. When given appropriate opportunities, a majority of the children, including the newcomer children, have satisfactory or better oral communication skills. The children learn to read systematically using carefully banded reading schemes and a range of appropriate approaches and materials including novels. The teachers use a structured phonics programme effectively to extend the children's spelling strategies and to enable them to write with greater independence and accuracy. In the FS and KS1, the children's word knowledge and simple sentence building skills are developed through an appropriate blend of shared and guided writing activities; in KS2 the children are provided with opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing for specific purposes across the curriculum.
- 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 enhanced by a whole school overview across all areas of mathematics to ensure balanced coverage and continuity of skills, knowledge and understanding. Across the school there is inconsistency in the level of challenge in numeracy activities; the teachers need to ensure that the planned learning experiences and teaching strategies employed within each class are matched more closely to the range of the children's abilities so that their knowledge and skills are consolidated and extended more effectively. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop the children's skills in number and mental mathematics. The children need well-planned opportunities to apply mental strategies to problem-solving and to discuss their approaches using mathematical language in order to develop greater flexibility in their mathematical thinking.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. The children's behaviour in class and in the playground is very good: the children engage readily and respectfully with each other, with the adults and with visitors to the school. The good range of extra curricular activities enhances the children's learning experiences and personal and social development beyond the classroom. The children are provided with opportunities to contribute to the decision making process through the school council.
- The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school has developed appropriate processes for early identification and a range of interventions and strategies to address low or underachievement. There is variation in the quality of the individual education

plans; overall, they need to be more sharply focused on the children's learning with appropriately matched and measurable targets and specific teaching strategies and provide greater opportunities for the children's involvement. Across the school, the classroom assistants contribute well to supporting the children's learning.

- The reception children interact confidently with the adults and the other children and they respond positively to many aspects of their planned programme. It is appropriate that the staff have already begun to review the observations and the planning in order to bring about greater continuity and progression in the children's learning.
- 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 and effective use of curriculum topics to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- Since her appointment in 2010, the Principal has focused tirelessly on developing the school's provision and addressing key areas. Led by the Principal, the staff have worked exceptionally hard to bring about important and necessary pastoral improvements: promoting positive behaviour and fostering the children's self-esteem; improving working relationships at all levels; reaching out to the parents to involve them more fully in the education of their children; and, raising the profile of the school in the community. Collectively, they have shown a most commendable effort in this regard.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are being developed appropriately to include a good level of consultation and an increasingly effective use of performance data to identify low and underachievement and areas for development. The current action plans need to focus more sharply on the actions which will bring about continued improvement in the children's learning and address the inconsistencies in the quality of learning and teaching. To this end, it will be important to strengthen the role of the curriculum co-ordinators to develop systematic and rigorous monitoring of the provision and the quality of the learning and teaching.
- There are appropriate procedures in place to keep the parents well-informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school: including an annual written report; a formal consultation, a termly news sheet; and, a text messaging service. In addition, the school has arranged curriculum information meetings and workshops for parents to enable them to support further their children's learning.
- The Board of Governors is supportive and active in key aspects of the life and work of the school and is committed to improving the provision for all the children. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the Inspectorate evaluation is that the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

- 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.

CONCLUSION

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 learning and teaching and in leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

The key areas for improvement are the need:

- for the teachers to develop an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching, specifically in relation to differentiation and progression in the children's learning, in order to raise the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy; and
- to build the capacity and strengthen the role of the curriculum co-ordinators to include the development of systematic and rigorous monitoring of the provision and the quality of the learning and teaching.

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	118
Number of Questionnaires Returned	21
Percentage of Returns	17.79%
Number of Comments	5

A majority of the parental questionnaire responses were positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the positive changes made by the Principal and reported that their children are happy and settled in the school. The concerns raised in the written comments, have been discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

In discussions with the governors they reported their confidence in the work of the Principal and appreciation of the hard work of the staff team. They emphasised the high level of information they receive from the school management team (SMT) and highlighted the focus on raising standards, the very positive impact that changes introduced by the Principal and staff have had on learning and the children's achievement, and the efforts made by staff to engage with the parents in support of their children's learning.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	5
Number of Comments	*

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	8
Number of Comments	5

* Denotes fewer than five

Five of the teachers and eight of the support staff completed the questionnaires. A majority of responses were positive and the written comments highlighted the hard work and professionalism of the staff and emphasised the fact that they enjoyed working with the children. Almost all of the comments, however, highlighted the need for management to improve communication with staff with regard to the timing and quality of information. This concern, along with other concerns raised in the written comments, has been discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children. The children spoke positively about school life; of their enjoyment of the extra-curricular activities available; and of being involved in the school council. They indicated that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns.

Health and safety/Accommodation

- There is a need for the school and CCMS to review the security of various access points around the school.
- There are no toilets suitable for wheelchair access.
- There is a need for the current staff toilets to be assessed with regard to building regulations and health and safety standards.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Francis of Assisi Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 08/04/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-6610** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	22	18	17	24	25
Enrolments					
Primary	208	182	164	166	170
Reception	4	7	7	6	10
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): 94.5% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 91.35%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21.2 | NI PTR: 20.2 | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 24.28 | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 18 to 28 | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | |
| i. Clerical support: | | | | 36 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | | | 45 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | | | 22.5 |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | | 4.12% |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | | 21.76% |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | | 10 |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | | 50% |
| 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
81% | Mathematics
81% | Irish
N/A | |
| xi. If there is a composite class with reception children in it, please indicate the numbers of children in the other year groups: | Year 1
17 | Year 2
21 | Year 3
18 | |

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