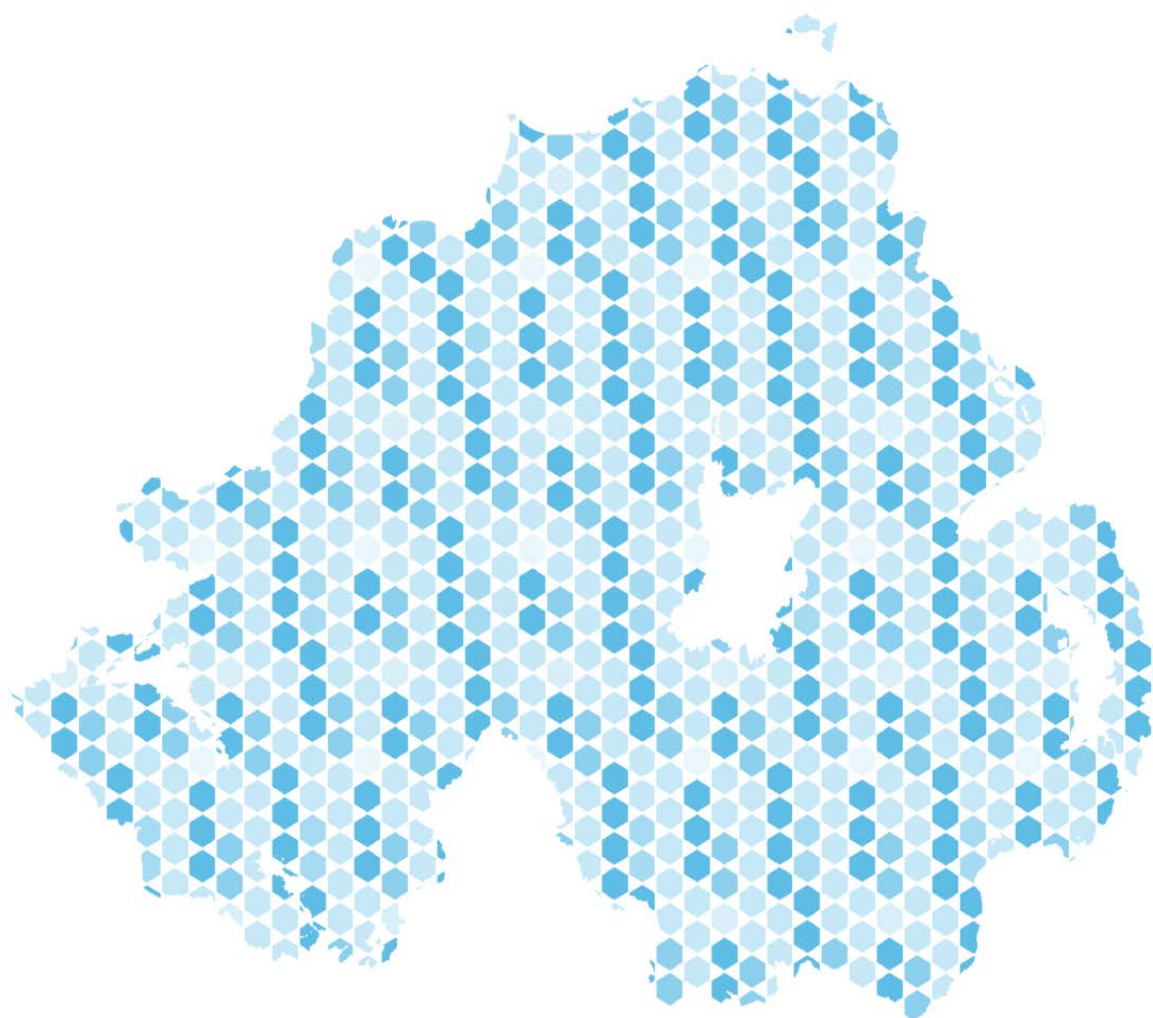


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St John's Primary School,  
Dernaflaw, Dungiven

Report of an Inspection  
in April 2013



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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 John's Primary School is situated in the townland of Dernaflaw, just off the main Foreglen Road approximately two miles north of Dungiven. Over the past five years, the school's enrolment had declined in line with trends in the local area, but it experienced an increase in numbers last year bringing the enrolment up to 134. Most of the children come from the surrounding rural area and from Dungiven. At the time of the inspection 31% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 22% were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning.

## 2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management, 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 the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by 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.

#### Summary of key findings

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

## 3. Achievements and standards

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

- The children are well motivated and most display high levels of interest and perseverance in their work. They are very respectful to their teachers and peers and work well in pairs and groups. They take pride in their work and respond well to challenging activities. When given the opportunity they can take responsibility for their own learning.

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English the school's performance has been consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) over the last four years. In mathematics the school's performance has been above the NI average in three of the last four years. When compared to schools in the same free school meals category over the same four year period, the level of attainment in English is well above the average in two out of the four years and in mathematics it is above the average in three out of the four years.
- An analysis of the school's internal data shows that almost all of the children throughout KS2 are making good progress and achieving standards in English and mathematics that are in line with their ability or above expectation. In most classes the children listen well to the adults and to one another and are able to give clear and extended responses using a good vocabulary. By the end of year 7 the more able children read with expression and demonstrate very good levels of understanding of the themes, characters and plot in texts. They can write to a good standard and demonstrate high levels of enjoyment, confidence and increasing independence in literacy. In mathematics, the children gain a good understanding across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. By the end of KS2 the more able children demonstrate very good mental strategies and flexibility in their mathematical thinking. They can apply a range of number operations, record their findings systematically and justify their decisions in response to appropriately demanding problem-solving and investigative activities.
- The children who have been identified as needing additional support with their learning are well integrated into all aspects of school life; a majority are making steady progress in relation to their identified needs and in line with their ability.
- By the end of KS2 the children demonstrate good achievements in ICT. They are confident and competent in using a range of software and digital media to support their learning.

#### 4. **Provision for Learning**

The quality of the provision for learning is good

- The teachers have developed a common format for medium term planning which identifies the key learning outcomes for the children and is promoting effectively the development of links across the curriculum. In the best practice, the teachers identify explicitly how the learning will be matched to the children's ability and complete effective evaluations of the quality and extent of the children's learning to inform subsequent planning.
- The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good with almost three-quarters of the lessons being good or very good. In the most effective lessons: the children were fully engaged and enjoyed the appropriately challenging activities; the lessons were well-paced and included a purposeful plenary; there was a suitable range of individual, paired and group activities; and, the teachers used ICT creatively to motivate the children and support their learning. Where the teaching was less effective, there was over-direction by the teacher and the learning activities were insufficiently matched to the varied needs and abilities of the children. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and provide positive and personalised feedback. In

the best practice, the teachers set targets to help the children improve the quality of their own work or guide the children in setting their own targets for improvement. In addressing the inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment, the teachers need to share and develop the most effective practice more widely across the school.

- The whole-school framework for literacy provides the teachers with detailed guidance to plan the overall provision. Most of the children have good opportunities to develop their confidence in talking and listening through both the planned classroom activities and the opportunities to perform in front of others, for example, at class assemblies. They learn to read systematically using banded reading schemes and a range of appropriate approaches and materials including novels. The teachers use a structured phonics and spelling programme effectively to extend the children's spelling strategies and to enable them to write with greater independence and accuracy. As they progress through the school most of the children are provided with opportunities to write in different genres and, in the best practice, to write purposefully in creative, meaningful contexts. There is a need to disseminate this good practice in order to promote the integration of literacy to support learning across the curriculum.
- In mathematics, the teachers make effective use of a range of practical materials, games and strategies to engage the children's mathematical curiosity and to develop and consolidate their understanding. The children work well together to develop financial capability and problem-solving skills in class and through well-planned whole school events. The teachers provide meaningful opportunities for the classes to collect, classify, record and present data from a range of situations linked appropriately to the children's own interests and experiences. Mental mathematics strategies are promoted through planned sessions; the teachers need to ensure that these sessions, across the school, are well-paced, challenging and provide opportunities for the children to explain the strategies used. The numeracy co-ordinator has identified appropriately the need to update the numeracy policy and programme to provide greater continuity and progression throughout the school and to ensure that key concepts are revised and reinforced.
- In the foundation stage, the teachers need to review the timetabling in order to employ more effectively the opportunities offered through play-based learning to develop the children's creativity, thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- The children who need additional help with their learning are identified early and are supported mainly in class by the teachers and classroom assistants. The child-friendly format of the individual education plans (IEP) serves to motivate and involve appropriately the children in the learning. Currently, the quality of the targets on the IEPs is inconsistent; they need to be sharper and achievable and the teachers need to develop a more systematic approach to tracking the children's progress.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. This is characterised, for example, by the school's inclusive, caring and supportive ethos, the exemplary behaviour of the children, the very good working relationships between the children and the staff, the opportunities for the children to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, the use of assemblies to develop the children's confidence and social skills, and the celebration of the children's work and achievements throughout the school.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the provision of fruit breaks, the focus on healthy lunches and the range of sporting activities on offer.

## 5. Leadership and management

### The quality of leadership and management is good

- The Principal, who has a teaching role in KS2, displays clear strategic and pastoral leadership for the school which is focused on achieving the highest possible standards for all of the children through a caring and child-centred provision. He has created a collegial approach to decision-making with the staff and together they have identified appropriate areas for school improvement.
- The key curriculum co-ordinators have made a useful start to monitoring and evaluating the provision in their areas, including making increasingly effective use of performance data to identify, at an early stage, those pupils who are underachieving in literacy and numeracy or require additional support with aspects of their learning. It will, however, be important to build further their capacity to enable more systematic self-evaluation and improvement planning. The current action plans need to focus more sharply on the actions which will bring about continued improvement in the children's learning and to include precise mechanisms for evaluation. It is appropriate that the Principal has identified as a priority, the need to review and develop the role of the co-ordinators.
- The school has effective arrangements for communicating with parents. They are encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school through, for example, the parent teacher association and they are kept up to date about school events through informative monthly newsletters produced by the year 7 children. The teachers provide programmes to help the parents support their children with aspects of literacy and numeracy and these sessions are well attended. The children benefit from meaningful links with neighbouring schools which enrich their learning experiences and help prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well-informed about the school's development plan targets and they are engaged in decisions relating to recruitment and finances within the school. They have identified aspects to review, including more formal consultation with the parents, children, staff and wider school community to establish priorities for the new school develop plan.
- 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 the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by 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. This is the need to:

- develop more systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision, to identify and share the best practice and address inconsistencies in planning, teaching and assessment.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the area for improvement.

### 6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	92
Number of Questionnaires Returned	63
Percentage of Returns	68.5
Number of Comments	19

A high percentage of parental questionnaires was returned and almost all the responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. Through their written comments the parents valued the supportive ethos within the school which contributes to developing the children's confidence, the positive working relationships between the teachers and the children and the high regard that the school is held in by the local community. A summary of the responses including the issues raised in a minority of the comments have been discussed with the Principal and the governors.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Number of Comments	*

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Number of Comments	*

\*redacted five or fewer responses

All of the teachers and almost all of the support staff expressed high levels of support for the work of the school.



The inspectors also met with a group of the children from year 6. The children spoke positively about their enjoyment of the extra-curricular activities available, for example, the film club, music, choir and sports. They indicated that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns about their well-being.

In discussions with representatives from the governors, they reported that they are well-informed about the life and work of the school. They strongly support the work of the Principal and the staff in providing a broad educational and pastoral experience for the children and they value the role of the parent teacher association in securing funds to help improve the children's learning experiences.

**Health and safety**

- A risk assessment should be carried out on the access arrangements at the front of the school.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St John's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 29/04/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-6187** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	21	19	15	16	23
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	150	146	137	129	134
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): 96.2% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 94.4%

<b>Primary &amp; Reception</b>	<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Special Unit</b>	<b>Irish Medium Unit</b>
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- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.1 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19.1
- iv. Class Size (Range): 15 to 23
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |  |      |  |
|---|--|------|--|
| i. Clerical support:  |  | 15   |  |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           |  | 35   |  |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: |  | 62.5 |  |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.24%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 21.6%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 30.6%
- 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> |
|  | 93.3%          | 86.6%              | N/A          |

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