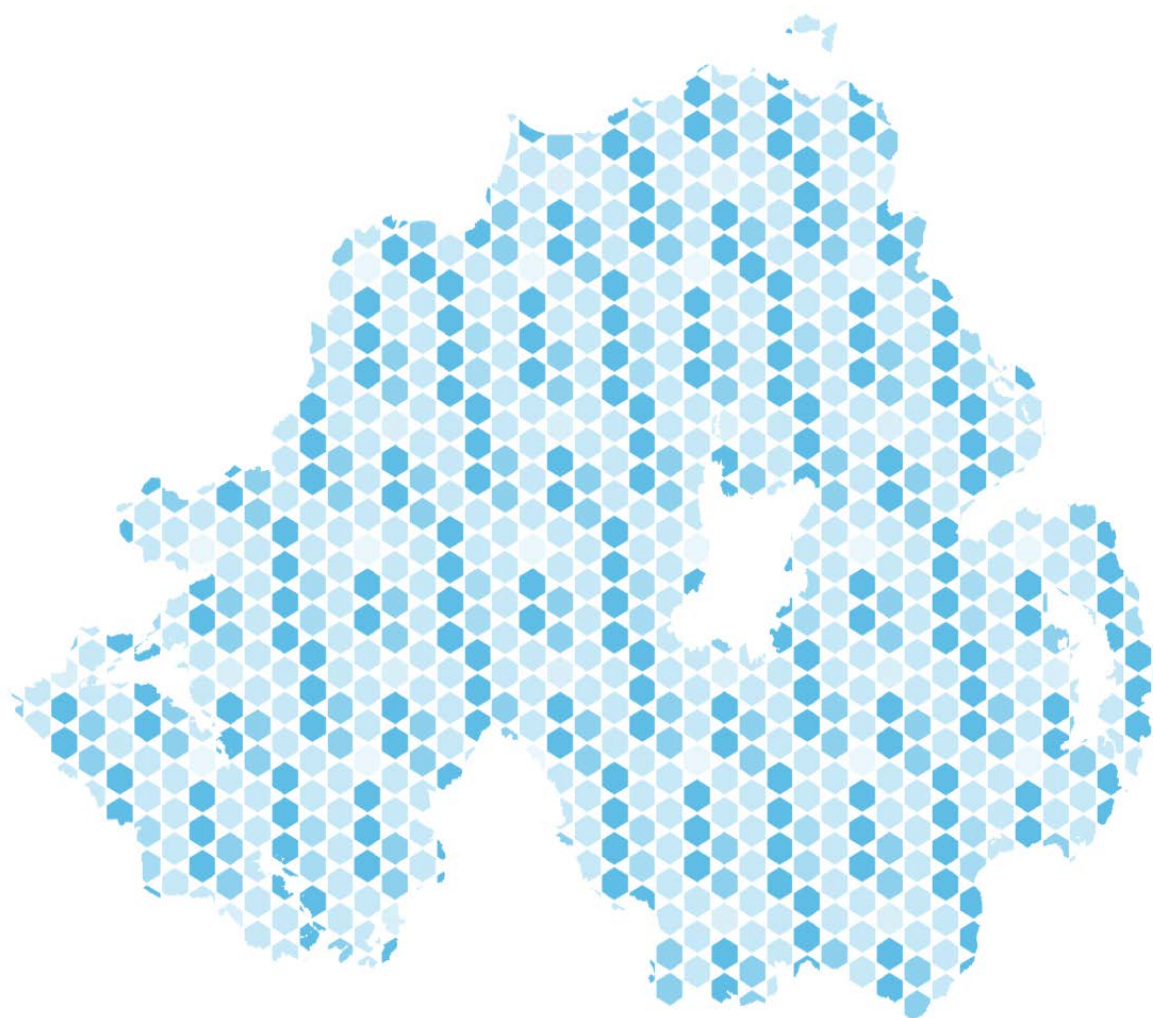


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Ballymartin

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	School Context	1
2.	Focus of inspection and overall finding	1
3.	Achievements and standards	1
4.	Provision for learning	2
5.	Leadership and management	4
6.	Summary of questionnaire responses	5

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 Joseph's Primary School is located in the village of Ballymartin, approximately ten miles from Newcastle, County Down. The enrolment has decreased over the past four years and currently stands at 83. At the time of the inspection 30% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 31% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning.

The school has experienced challenging staffing issues over the past year. Of the five teachers present during the inspection, only two are permanent members of staff; one of these teachers is now the acting-Principal.

2. Focus of the 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.

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.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management	Satisfactory Inadequate Inadequate
---	--

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is satisfactory.

- In the foundation stage, most of the children are able to engage purposefully in their learning, and have good levels of independence and self-management. As they progress through the school, there are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop these skills further, to engage in effective paired and group work and to manage their own learning. In almost all classes, the children need to be encouraged to listen more attentively to each other during learning activities and to take more care with the presentation of their written work.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that, in three of the four years, the school's performance in English and mathematics has been in line with or above the Northern Ireland (NI) average; it has also been in line with or above the average in three of the four years when compared to schools in the same free school meals category.
- A majority of the children achieve in line with expectation in both literacy and numeracy; for a significant minority of the children, however, the standards need to be improved. In order to achieve higher standards in literacy, the children need to be provided with opportunities to read more widely and to write more extensively and across a greater range of genre. To raise further their standards in mathematics, the children need to be encouraged to draw on their understanding of number when completing mental calculations; to develop and use their preferred mental mathematics strategies; and to be helped to become more competent in explaining their thinking using accurate mathematical language. They also need to be provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of collecting, representing and interpreting data and to apply their knowledge of mathematics within real-life contexts.
- Throughout the school, the children are competent in their use of ICT to re-draft their written work. For the last three years the children in year 7 have participated in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments (CCEA) ICT Accreditation Scheme, and have attained standards which are in line with those achieved in schools across Northern Ireland.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is inadequate.

- The school has been faced with a number of significant issues within the past year, all of which have impacted on the quality of provision it has been able to provide. These include; the absence of the Principal; the deployment of a number of teachers in a temporary capacity; and the realisation by the staff and the Board of Governors that much development work needs to be undertaken to ensure that all of the children's needs are met as effectively as possible. In that time, the present teaching staff, under the leadership of the acting-Principal, have worked exceptionally hard both to maintain the effective functioning of the school and also to try to address some of the pressing whole-school development needs. Collectively they have shown a most commendable effort in this regard. The evaluation of the current provision as inadequate is symptomatic, not of work undertaken by staff in the recent past, but due to a lack of adequate development work undertaken over a number of years. The key findings which follow indicate where the provision is not as good as it should be as a result of this lack of development work.
- The quality of the planning, assessment, learning and teaching is inconsistent across the key stages. In the most effective practice, the teachers have developed an integrated approach through which they evaluate accurately the quality and extent of the children's learning; they use the outcomes from these evaluations to plan or amend the learning activities in order to meet the needs of all of the children. During the inspection, the quality of learning and teaching was good in almost one third of the lessons observed; in most of the lessons observed it was satisfactory and in need of improvement. In the less effective

practice, there was over-direction by the teachers; insufficient account was taken of the children's prior learning; the organisation for and management of the children's learning was not undertaken well and there was insufficient purposeful differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children. The over-directed teaching resulted in limited opportunities being provided for the children to develop their thinking and reasoning skills or to apply their learning within a variety of contexts. Consequently, in these instances, the children do not make the progress in their learning of which they are capable.

- The teachers have, appropriately, identified the need to implement more comprehensive whole school programmes for literacy and numeracy and are currently reviewing the provision in each of these areas of learning. To improve the literacy provision, increased emphasis needs to be given to developing the children as more competent readers and writers as they progress through the school. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets and more opportunities need to be provided for the children to write extensively and creatively in their own words. In numeracy, the children's mathematical knowledge and skills are not developed incrementally within and across year groups. There is also a lack of balance in the mathematics curriculum with too much emphasis placed on the completion of routine pencil and paper exercises and insufficient opportunities given for the children to apply their learning within everyday contexts. In reviewing the provision within both of these areas, it will also be important for the teachers to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching, specifically in relation to differentiation and progression in the children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. This is evidenced through, for example, the adults' attention to the children's health and well-being and through the opportunities provided for the children to contribute to decision making in relation to the school environment. The school has also developed close links with a range of educational and medical professionals and has acted on their advice in order to meet the needs of identified children.
- The school has identified a high proportion of the children, in excess of 30%, for placement on the special educational needs register. A significant minority of these children's identified needs can be managed through effective classroom teaching; the school needs, therefore, to reconsider its criteria for placement on the register. The provision made for the children with education plans is presently not matched well enough to their needs. The children who receive additional help through withdrawal sessions are provided with it in a sensitive and supportive manner. A reading partnership programme has been introduced recently and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the children's confidence and reading competence.
- The school is equipped with a small computer suite in addition to individual terminals in each of the classrooms. The children have access to these at regular intervals but there is insufficient use made of ICT to support the children's learning. Recently, the school has been able to install its first interactive white board. This is having a positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching for the children in the foundation stage.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate.

- The processes for self-evaluation to effect improvement in the quality of learning and teaching, including the analysis and use made of the school's performance data, are under-developed. In recent months, the teachers have identified and made concerted efforts to develop and improve a range of aspects of the school's provision. They are aware of the numerous developments which require attention within the school in order to improve the quality of the provision and to raise the children's levels of attainment. The challenge for the staff and governors is to prioritise these developments within a strategic and time-costed framework to ensure that those relating specifically to learning and teaching are addressed in a manageable way for all concerned. In order to do this, the staff and governors require significant support from their employing authority, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and from the Southern Education and Library Board's Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service.
- The school has established a variety of useful links with other primary and post-primary schools in the surrounding area. Together they are involved in cultural and sporting activities which broaden the children's understanding of difference. The "Friends of the School" group provides support to the children through the raising of funds for additional resources and help in organising a range of activities. The school provides the parents with helpful information about their children's progress through an annual written report and a parent-teacher meeting. While the school has developed its procedures for communicating with parents, including usefully through its website, some of the parents still report this as an area to be improved.
- There has been a number of changes in governor membership within the past year. As a recently formed team, the members have identified and are receptive to the need for further guidance and support in carrying out their role within the school. The governors are committed to ensuring the school's improvement and are supportive of the staff in their efforts to address the necessary developments to bring about that improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The safeguarding policies, which are available for parents on the school website, need to be updated to take account of the changes in staffing. A printed summary of the policies also needs to be issued to parents every two years.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school 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 staff.

CONCLUSION

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

The main areas for improvement include the need:

- for the teachers to develop a shared 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 attainment in literacy and numeracy; and
- for all those involved in leading and managing the school to identify, prioritise and implement, in a strategic and manageable manner, the actions to bring about sustained improvement in the overall quality of provision in the school and, in particular, in the quality of 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 12-18 month period.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	62
Number of Questionnaires Returned	30
Percentage of Returns	48%
Number of Comments	19

Most of the responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a good level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents value the family, supportive atmosphere in the school and the teachers' commitment to the children. A significant number of the parents raised concerns about the quality and regularity of the communication from the school. All of the concerns raised in the written comments have been discussed with the governors and the acting-Principal.

The inspectors also met with a very small number of parents who had requested the opportunity to speak with the inspection team.

In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation of the work of the whole staff. They acknowledged the challenges facing the school but nonetheless expressed their commitment to addressing these in the interests of the children.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children. The children reported that they feel happy and safe in school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns. They also spoke positively about the school's reward system; about the work of the school Eco Council and about the school's response to a range of charity appeals.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	*
Number of Comments	*

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

*Denotes fewer than 5

Almost half of the teachers and almost all the support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the staff who responded indicated their support for the work of the school.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Joseph's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 19/11/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-1325** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	19	10	13	12	6
Enrolments					
Primary	99	90	94	93	83
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): 95.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

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

- | | | 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) | 4.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21 | NI PTR: 20.2 | | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 21 | | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 18 to 25 | | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | | |
| | i. Clerical support: | 26 | | | |
| | ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 17.5 | | | |
| | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 0 | | | |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | 2.4% | | | |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | 31% | | | |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | 0 | | | |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | 30% | | | |
| 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
59% | Mathematics
65% | Irish
N/A | |

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2013

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

