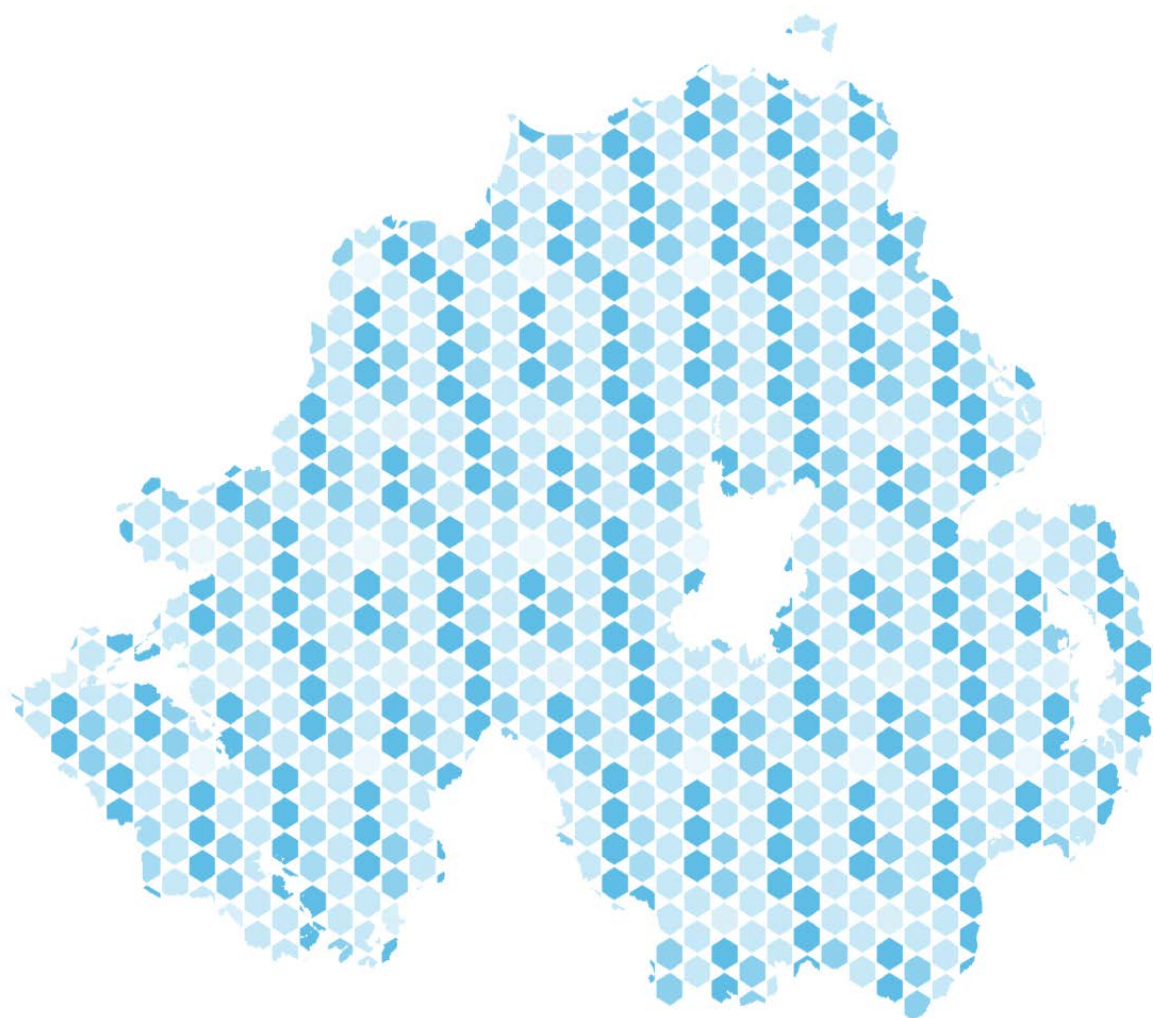


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Bangor

Report of an Inspection
in June 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 Malachy's Primary School is situated on Clandeboye Road in Bangor, County Down. The enrolment has increased from 287 in 2008 to the current figure of 352 which includes a nursery unit with two sessions of 26 children in each. At the time of the inspection, 32% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 15% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. A new Principal was appointed in September 2011.

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; 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 the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good; in the nursery unit, it is outstanding. 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:

- implement more rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluation, including the more effective analysis of performance data, to inform further improvements in learning and teaching and improve the standards the children attain in literacy and numeracy.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management Nursery Unit	Good Very Good Good Outstanding
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

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

The children learn with enjoyment and enthusiasm and, as they become more independent, are able to manage and take responsibility for their own learning. They take pride in their achievements and are keen to show and talk about their work.

An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data shows that in the last four years, the school's performance in English has been at or above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and the average for schools in the same free school meals category. In mathematics, it has been at or above the NI average and the average for schools in the same free school meals category in three of the last four years. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability.

The children who require support with aspects of their learning are involved fully in school life and work confidently alongside their peers. The school's internal data indicates that almost all of these children make very good progress in their reading.

By year 7, most of the children express their thoughts and feelings articulately; they read with confidence and expression and produce writing of a good to very good standard across a variety of genres. They have good flexibility in their mathematical thinking and, when given the opportunity, can apply their learning in numeracy across other areas of the curriculum and in real-life contexts.

The standards achieved by the children in the nursery unit are outstanding. The children engage in sustained periods of purposeful play, they have a natural curiosity about the world around them by asking interesting questions of the adults and readily turn to books to source further information. They use early mathematical language appropriately in a range of contexts and engage enthusiastically in counting songs and rhymes.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The planning for literacy and numeracy is comprehensive and provides for progression in the children's knowledge and skills. A key feature of the literacy provision is the holistic approach to the development of the children's literacy skills and the creative exploitation of opportunities for them to connect their learning and to apply their skills across all areas of the curriculum. Within the numeracy provision there is an appropriate emphasis placed on the development of the language and thinking skills in mathematics; the children need more opportunities to apply these skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of the learning and teaching in most of the lessons observed was good or better, and in a majority, it was very good or outstanding. Key strengths in the teaching are the high expectations held by the teachers and their effective questioning to develop the children's thinking and oral responses. The teachers provide interesting and challenging activities and make effective use of ICT to develop the children's literacy and numeracy skills and their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

- The school has identified appropriately the need to review the provision for play based learning in the foundation stage to provide more challenging activities which develop the children's independence and learning in literacy and numeracy and build on their prior learning and experiences gained in the nursery unit.
- The provision for learning in the nursery unit is outstanding. The high quality observation and assessment strategies inform future planning and meet the needs and interests of individual children well. Very effective use is made of the indoor and outdoor learning environment to support the children in making connections in their learning across the curriculum. The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently high quality and particular emphasis is placed on the development of their speech and language skills.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good. The school and the nursery unit identify well, and at an early stage, the children who require additional support with their learning; this is guided well by individual education plans which have achievable targets and useful strategies to guide classroom practice. Effective monitoring of the children's progress informs future planning for their individual needs. The withdrawal support for literacy in the school is sensitive, flexible and responsive to the children's needs, interests and abilities.
- The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos and all of the staff are committed to the children's well-being and their personal, social and emotional development. There are well-considered procedures in place to encourage and reward positive behaviour and the children's achievements are celebrated throughout the school and the nursery unit. The children display confidence and high levels of self-esteem. Their behaviour is excellent and they interact respectfully with the adults, their peers and visitors.
- The school and nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children are made aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and benefit from access to an appropriate range of physical activities within and beyond the curriculum.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- Since his appointment, the Principal has developed effectively the positive climate for learning across the school, including the very good links with the parents and with the wider community. The staff's commitment to the holistic development of the children enables a collegial approach to school development and improvement. The school development plan places appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and raising the standards the children attain. The analysis and use of performance data to identify and address underachievement across the school is at an early stage; in taking this work forward, the leadership team needs to implement more rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluation, in order to identify the specific actions which will bring about further improvements in learning and teaching and in the standards the children attain in literacy and numeracy.

- There is a strong culture of self-evaluation and reflection in the nursery unit. The school development planning process is well developed and appropriate priorities have been identified to improve the children's achievements and learning opportunities. The staff has a shared understanding of the value of the nursery unit in the school community and has high expectations for the future development of the provision.
- The arrangements for communicating and consulting with the parents involve them appropriately in their children's education and in the ongoing development of the school. The meaningful links established with external agencies, other schools and the local and wider community broaden the curriculum provision and support and enhance the children's learning, health and well being.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the inspection team's evaluation is that the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are aware of their role in the school improvement process; they are fully involved in the life and work of the school and they exercise well their challenge function.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and nursery unit have 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 this 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:

- implement more rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluation, including the more effective analysis of performance data, to inform further improvements in learning and teaching and improve the standards the children attain in literacy and numeracy.

The ETI will monitor the school's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

NURSERY UNIT

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery unit is outstanding. The nursery unit has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	116
Number of Questionnaires Returned	62
Percentage of Returns	53%
Number of Comments	35
NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the Nursery Unit	52
Number of Questionnaires Returned	21
Percentage of Returns	40%
Number of Comments	12

The parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of support for and satisfaction with the work of the school. In the additional written comments, the parents praised the staff for their dedication and attention to the individual needs of the children and expressed their satisfaction with their children's progress. They highlighted the effective communication arrangements, the caring and welcoming environment and the additional learning experiences which develop the children's confidence, self esteem and social skills.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	14
Number of Comments	11

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	14
Number of Comments	11

The teacher and support staff responses highlighted their enjoyment of working in the school, the teamwork and support for one another and the strong sense of community with the children's needs given the highest priority.

In discussions with the governors, they praised the child-focused nature of the school, the friendly and inclusive atmosphere within and the hard work and commitment of all the staff.

In discussions with the year 6 children they spoke positively about the support provided by their teachers; their participation in the School Council and Eco Club, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities which they enjoy. They reported that they feel safe in school and are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work, safety or well being.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Malachy's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 03/06/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-6148** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	54	37	35	52	59
Enrolments					
Primary	287	295	278	294	300
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52	52
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 are based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year
 (expressed as a percentage): 94% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register: 93.74%

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): 14 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 23.47 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 25
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|-------|
| i. Clerical support: | 46 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 40 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 127.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0.33%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 15.3%
- viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 32%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2011/12 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):
- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| English | Mathematics | Irish |
| 84.5% | 82.2% | N/A |

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, BANGOR

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
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	5
At CoP stages 3 or 4**		
At CoP stages 1 or 2**		
With English as an additional language	2	1

* On 1 July.

** 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.	1%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2½ hours	2½ 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	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	40%
Number of written comments	12

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