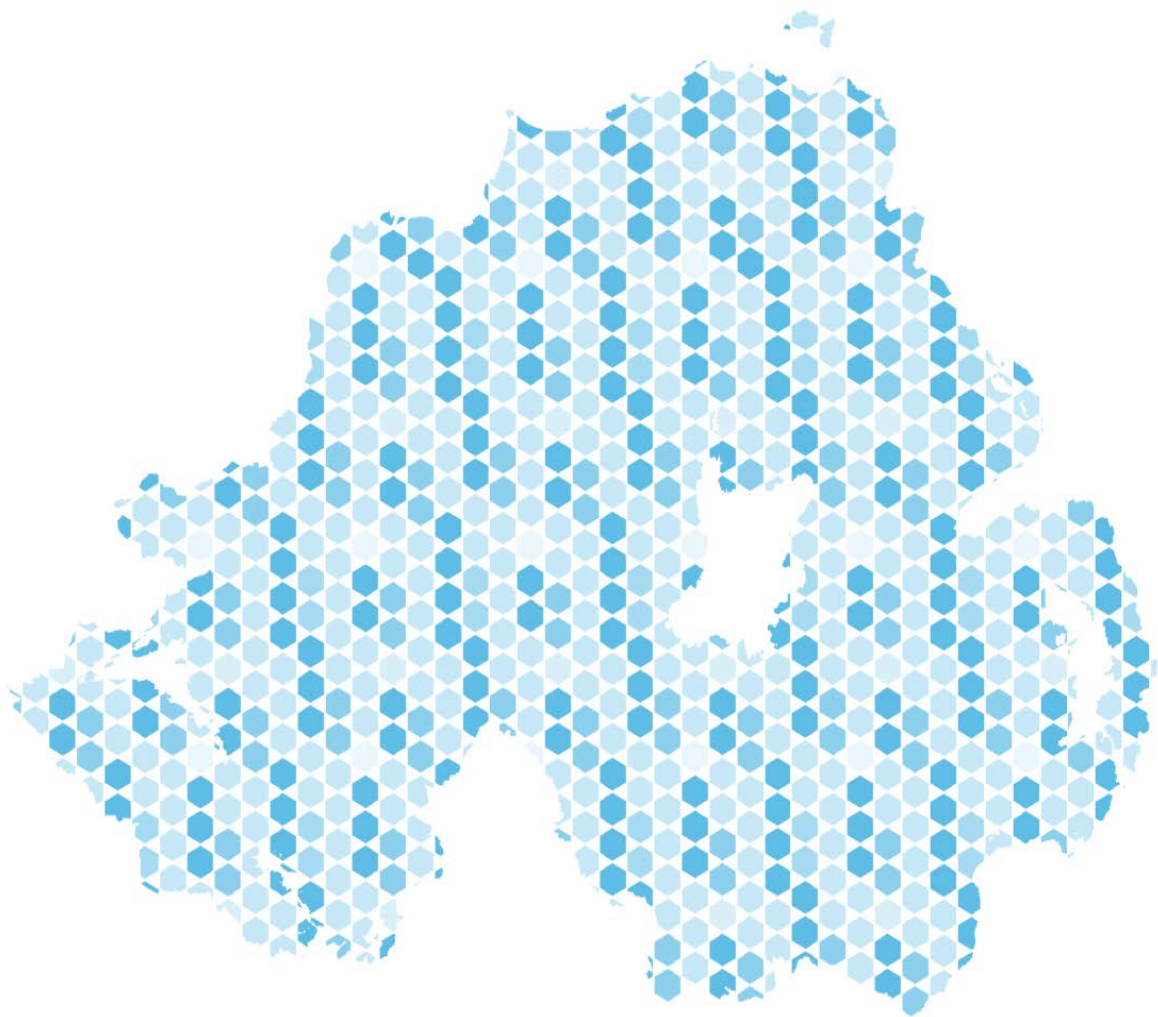


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Newry

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 Patrick's Primary School is situated within Ballinlare Gardens, in Rooney's Meadow, Newry, County Down. The enrolment has risen steadily over the past four years, from 298 in 2008 to the current enrolment of 378 which includes 53 children in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection 53% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 16% of the children were identified as requiring additional help with aspects of their learning. There is a small number of newcomer children in the school and nursery unit.

Prior to the inspection, the school had experienced a protracted period of complex and challenging working relationship issues and a significant number of changes in staffing, including changes in key positions of leadership and management.

## 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 safeguarding.

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

### OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards, and learning and teaching 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 Quality of provision Leadership and management Nursery Unit	Satisfactory Satisfactory Satisfactory Satisfactory
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## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### 3. Achievements and standards

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

- Most of the children in the school are enthusiastic and well motivated to learn; they settle quickly to the planned learning activities and remain focused to the completion of their set tasks. When provided with appropriate opportunities, the children have good levels of independence; they can manage their own learning and can work together collaboratively in pairs and small groups. They need more consistent opportunities to develop these skills as they progress through the school. Throughout the school, the children respond positively to the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour.
- 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 below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the school's performance in English has been in line with or above the average in two of the four years; in mathematics, it has been significantly below the average in three of the four years.
- By year 7, most of the children attain good standards in writing and talking and listening; a majority of the children read to a satisfactory level. In mathematics they have a good understanding of number facts and operations and can complete written exercises accurately. When completing mental calculations, a majority of the children draw on a narrow range of strategies and lack confidence when explaining their chosen methods of working. The school has identified a significant number of children who are under-achieving in literacy and/or numeracy. The school's records indicate that the 'booster' programmes which have been put in place to address under-achievement in literacy have led to improvement in the reading standards attained by identified groups of children. The Leadership Team and staff need to take more strategic action to address the levels of under-achievement in mathematics.
- A majority of the children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs are making good progress in their learning and achieve standards in line with their ability or above expectation; they are well motivated, confident and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- The children in the nursery unit are well settled and are making good progress in their learning. In each of the nursery classes the children understand and follow the routines well; most of them have good levels of independence in their personal care, in the snack and lunch routines and in accessing and replacing their chosen resources. The children engage confidently with the adults and with each other and the majority of them display good language skills. During the inspection, there were many examples of the children engaging in collaborative and sustained, purposeful play, particularly in the role play areas.
- Most of the children are confident and attain good standards in their use of ICT. Throughout the school, they make effective use of a range of appropriate programs and online resources to support their learning across the curriculum.

#### 4. Provision for learning

##### **The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

- Prior to the appointment of the current Principal and Vice-principal, the school had experienced a number of significant relationship and staffing issues, all of which have impacted on the quality of curriculum and staff development and on the provision which the school has been able to make. The teachers recognise that they now need to focus their efforts on ensuring high quality learning and teaching and on raising the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They are working diligently, under the guidance of the Leadership Team, to bring about these improvements. In order to effect the required improvements, the teachers need to develop an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and assessment; they need to identify the key actions which will lead to the required improvements and to implement these actions consistently in all classes.
- Throughout the school there is inconsistency in the quality of planning, teaching and assessment. As a result, there is inconsistency in the quality of the children's learning experiences within and across year groups. The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; in almost two thirds it was good or very good. In the remaining one-third, there was a need for significant improvement in the quality of the teaching. In almost all classes, the teachers need to plan more effectively to meet the needs of the children in the middle ability range.
- In the Foundation Stage, the provision for play-based learning is at an early stage of development. The staff needs to review the planning for this area of the curriculum to ensure that it focuses more specifically on supporting and enriching the children's learning.
- The children acquire basic reading skills through a well-structured phonological awareness programme, and through shared and guided reading sessions. The school has identified, appropriately, the need to develop a more consistent, rigorous and planned approach to the teaching of reading, throughout the school, in order to address the levels of under-achievement. In mathematics, the teachers have identified, appropriately, the need to develop the children's skills in mental mathematics and processes. In doing so, it will also be important for them to provide the children with well-planned opportunities to apply their mental strategies within real-life problem-solving contexts and to discuss their approaches using accurate mathematical language.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school and nursery unit is very good. This is evidenced through, for example: the inclusive and supportive ethos at all levels; the emphasis placed on helping the children to manage their individual behaviour; the consistent and calm approach to behaviour management in the classrooms; and the school council and playground peer-mentoring initiatives which enable the children to take on roles of responsibility within the school.

- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is good. A suitable emphasis is placed on the early identification of children who require additional help with aspects of their learning and on the provision of individualised in-class support by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school has identified, appropriately, the need to implement a more robust system to monitor the impact of this provision on the children's learning and to track more closely the progress of all the children with special educational needs. An effective occupational therapy sensory programme has been tailored to meet the needs of a small cohort of children who require extra support with their co-ordination and motor skills.
- In the nursery unit there are good opportunities for learning in most of the areas of the pre-school curriculum; the provision for the development of the children's early mathematical skills needs to be developed further. The teachers' planning has recently become more focused on the children's learning and ensures the provision of an interesting range of activities for them. It will be important for the staff to develop the planning further to include a range of open-ended questions in order to guide more effectively their interactions with the children and to extend further the children's learning, language and thinking skills. The staff also needs to review aspects of the daily routine, particularly the small and large group sessions, in order to ensure that the planned activities are more suitable for the age and stage of development of the children.
- The quality of the arrangements for the use of ICT resources and strategies to support learning is good. In most classes, the teachers have integrated ICT well to support the children's learning.
- The school and nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the promotion of healthy breaks and opportunities for sporting activities, during physical education lessons and as part of the after-schools programme.

## 5. Leadership and management

### **The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.**

- Within the past three years, the Leadership Team has worked very effectively to develop a strong team spirit amongst the whole staff; to establish good working relationships amongst all members of the school community; and to ensure a positive, nurturing ethos and a strong commitment to the pastoral care of the children and the staff.
- Almost all of the curriculum co-ordinators, including the Nursery Unit co-ordinator, have been appointed recently. They are working hard at an individual level to promote improvement within their respective areas of responsibility. In order to effect the required improvements in learning and teaching throughout the school, the Leadership Team needs to work closely with the co-ordinators to develop a more strategic and coherent approach to self evaluation, including the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision. The outcomes from the self evaluation need to be used, as part of the school development planning process, to identify and implement the key actions which will bring about improvement in the achievements and standards of the children.

- The school has established and continues to develop links with the parents and the local community in order to support and enrich the children's learning, to nurture their health and well-being and to deepen their understanding of other cultures. The parents are encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school through, for example, the Friends of St. Patrick's group; they are kept informed about their children's progress through an individual meeting in term 1 and an annual written report at the end of each year. The school liaises effectively with a wide range of educational, health and statutory agencies in order to support individual children.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the evaluation is that the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about and engaged in decisions in relation to recruitment, safeguarding, finances and management structures within the school. Their contribution to the life and work of the school could be further enhanced through the monitoring of the processes for self evaluation and the outcomes from the specific actions undertaken to raise the overall standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy.
- 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 by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards, and learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. 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, in order to raise the children's attainment in literacy and numeracy; and
- to develop a more strategic and coherent approach to self evaluation, including the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching, in order to identify and implement the key actions which will bring about improvement in the achievements and standards of the children.

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	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	106
Number of Questionnaires Returned	43
Percentage of Returns (Based on Actual Issue)	40.6%
Number of Comments	21
NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	52
Number of Questionnaires Returned	13
Percentage of Returns	25%
Number of Comments	6

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school and nursery unit. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable and dedicated Principal and staff team. In addition, they expressed their appreciation of the care and support shown by the staff to the children and their families. The very small number of concerns raised in the written comments has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation of the work of the whole staff; of the staff's commitment to improving the quality of the provision for the children and families within the community and of their very positive response to the changing circumstances of the school.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	12
Number of Comments	7

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Number of Comments	2

Most of the staff indicated that they are very happy in their work in the school and that they appreciate the Principal's care and attention to the well-being of all of the staff.

In discussions with the children from Year 6, they reported that they feel safe and secure in school and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. The majority of them talked positively about their experiences in school and spoke with confidence about their role in the school council and playground initiatives such as Paddy's Patrol.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Patrick's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 15/04/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-1158** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	40	42	46	55	51
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	298	307	305	318	325
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	53	52	53
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): 93.1% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 89.7%

**Primary & Reception    Nursery Unit    Special Unit    Irish Medium Unit**

- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 13.4    2    0    0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 24.2    NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 25
- iv. Class Size (Range): 20 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- i. Clerical support: 49.5
  - ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 70
  - iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 283
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5.5%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 16%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 52.91%
- 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 75.6%**    **Mathematics 64.4%**    **Irish N/A**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NURSERY UNIT, NEWRY

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	27
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	1	2
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
With English as an additional language	2	2

\* 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.	38.47%
Average attendance for the previous year.	88.9%

### 2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4½ hours	-	-

### 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	1

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

### 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	25%
Number of written comments	6

**Health and safety**

- There is a need for a regular risk assessment to be carried out with regard to access to the school grounds.
- There is no visual access to a number of classrooms and rooms which are used for individual and small group work.

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