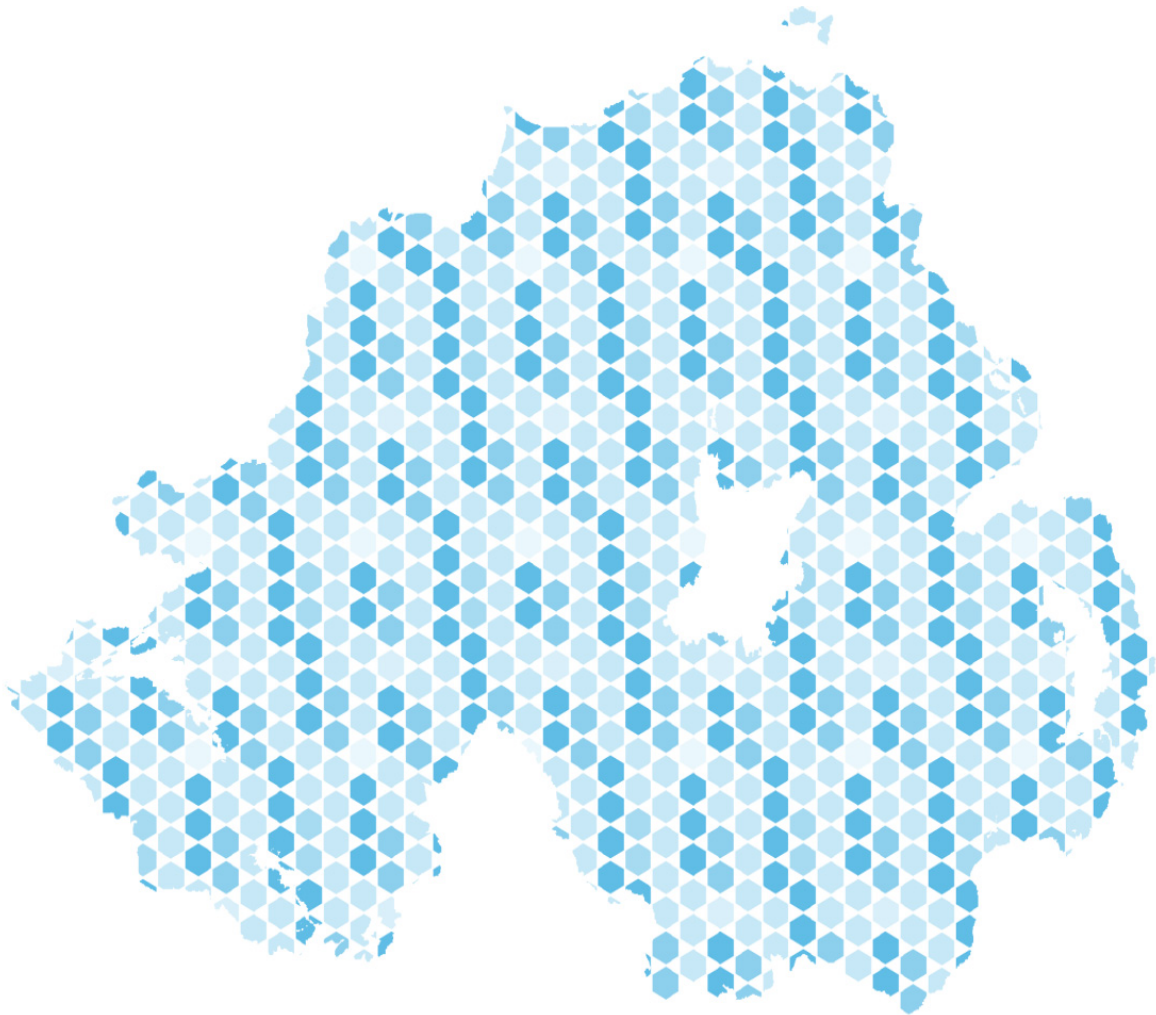


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
Coalisland

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012

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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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Patrick's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 26/03/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-6047** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	35	27	33	26	40
Enrolments					
Primary	216	216	222	217	221
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): 94.3% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 93.13%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 11 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.09 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 22.1
- iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 25 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 50 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.35%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 25.33%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 27.6%
- 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):
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------|-----|
| English | 86.48% | Mathematics | 91.89% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------|-----|

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in Annaghmore, about two miles from Coalisland, County Tyrone. It is one of four primary schools which serve the parish of Clonoe. Most of the children come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has risen slightly in recent years and it stands currently at 221. At the time of the inspection, 28% of the children were entitled to free school meals and approximately 25% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There are 12 newcomer children and a small number of children from the travelling community in the school.

At the time of the inspection, seven out of the ten full time permanent teachers were present and temporary teachers were in place in the remaining three classes.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; 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.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teachers and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from year 6.

Of the 109 questionnaires issued to the parents in the school, 60 (55%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 29 which contained an additional written comment. Almost all of the responses from the questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. In particular, the parents valued the friendly, inclusive family ethos, the very caring and approachable staff and the ways in which the staff developed the children's skills and confidence through the provision of a wide range of activities. The very small number of issues raised was shared with the Principal.

Almost all of the teachers and most of the support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the staff indicated that they feel valued and are very happy in their work in the school.

The governors expressed their strong support for the whole staff, praising their team work and their commitment to nurturing all of the children and ensuring the school's continuing strong and purposeful links with the local community.

In discussions held with the year 6 children they spoke very positively about the happy, caring ethos in the school, about the variety of their learning experiences and about how they contribute to all aspects of school life. They also emphasised how they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. This is evidenced through, for example, the school's child-centred ethos and the very good working relationships at all levels. It is also demonstrated through the attention and care the adults give to the holistic needs of all of the children, through the provision, for example, of access to counselling support where this may be of benefit to individual children and through the value that the Principal and the rest of the staff place on the children's opinions on all aspects of school life.

The staff is highly committed to ensuring that the diverse needs of all of the children, including those on the special educational needs (SEN) register or with English as an Additional Language (EAL), are clearly understood and addressed. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are included well in lessons; the well-planned and purposeful programmes and the individual education plan (IEP) targets for children with SEN are focused appropriately to inform the learning and teaching strategies.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children; these arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

1.6 HEALTHY EATING and PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example through participation in the Boost Better Breaks programme and in the Health Promoting School Award and through the provision of a good range of physical play and extra-curricular sporting activities which encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has worked hard to develop effective links with the parents and others in the community, including a range of primary and post-primary schools. These links include, for example, the provision of newsletters and information about school events, the continued development of the school's website, the regular opportunities for the parents to meet both formally and informally with the teachers and the very good use of members of the community to enhance the quality of the children's learning experiences. The school organises a good range of events such as curriculum evenings for parents and a residential school trip with three other partner schools. There is a very supportive Parent Teacher Association which raises funds to provide important additional learning resources.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are very friendly, motivated and keen to talk about their learning; almost all settle quickly and enthusiastically to their learning tasks, in which they engage with interest and have very good levels of maturity and independence. Almost all collaborate well in pairs and small groups to solve problems and carry out investigative activities and to share their

thoughts and ideas. As they progress through the school, most of the children ask well-reasoned questions, can reflect upon their own learning behaviours and articulate confidently the thinking skills and personal capabilities they are using in aspects of their learning. Their behaviour is of a very high standard.

In the foundation stage (FS), the children learn through a well-balanced and stimulating combination of formal and play-based activities to develop the children's sense of enquiry and excitement. In the best practice observed, during these play sessions, the children choose their activities freely and are given time to develop their play, the quality of the interactions is consistently of a high standard with the children often sharing ideas that are used effectively by the adults to develop further learning. This good practice needs to be disseminated throughout the FS in order to develop further the quality of the play experiences and in particular the opportunities for making choices, problem-solving and investigations.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that, with the exception of one year, the school's performance in English and mathematics is consistently above the Northern Ireland average and is continuing to improve further. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, and with the same exception, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are consistently above the average.

During the inspection, there was evidence to indicate that the newcomer children are increasing in proficiency and confidence in their use of the English language and make very good progress in their learning.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision for English and literacy is outstanding.

The literacy co-ordinator has been in post for five years and has overseen significant developments in the improvement of the literacy provision. The literacy action plan is appropriately focused on improving the reading and writing processes across the school. Considerable work at whole-school level has taken place in the development of the language and literacy scheme of work to guide progression in learning and teaching across the year groups. Monitoring of the standards is mainly through the recently developed use of standardised test data and the introduction of sampling and levelling of the children's written work. It is appropriate that there are plans to extend assessment for learning and sharing of best practice in literacy to all classes in the school.

The children display well-developed talking and listening skills. In the FS, the children are adept at listening to and following instructions. Across the key stages, almost all of the children communicate very effectively during group work and have a clear understanding of the rules of group discussion. As the children progress through the school they listen attentively and speak with increasing maturity about their work and use a well-developed literacy rich vocabulary.

The children make excellent progress in reading and both the boys and girls show enjoyment in reading. In the FS, the teachers use an effective range of reading strategies to secure and develop the children's basic skills. In addition, the older children write stories for and read books to the younger children to improve their reading skills. Most of the children read with fluency, demonstrate very good word attack skills and have a very good

understanding of text. A Reading Partnership Programme, withdrawal sessions with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and paired reading provide additional support for a small number of children who require help with their reading. By year 7 all of the children are able to read in line with their ability and a majority have attained an outstanding standard of reading competence.

The children achieve high standards in writing. In the FS the teachers support the children well to experiment with early writing and develop letter formation, to write words and to express ideas in simple sentences in meaningful contexts. In KS1 and KS2 the children develop increasing fluency in their writing; they apply their research skills about topic matters such as, for example, planning permission for airport runways and the causes of Titanic's sinking. They write in a wide variety of genres and for a variety of audiences. By year 7 all of the children attain standards in line with their ability and a majority surpass expectations.

Throughout the school, the staff is using ICT well to help motivate the children to read and write with confidence and accuracy.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is very good.

The numeracy co-ordinator has been in post for two years and demonstrates a clear understanding of the provision, areas for development and standards achieved. The school has recently reviewed its short term planning and has made a good start in analysing performance data. It will be important that this is continued and self-evaluation is developed further to inform better an agreed whole school approach to numeracy and mathematics. The school gives a high priority to developing the children's flexibility with number and their mathematical reasoning through skilled questioning and developing well their thinking skills and personal capabilities. The teachers connect the activities to purposeful and real life situations and focus on the development of processes. The school has assisted the parents well in supporting their children's development of numeracy skills by providing access to software, curricular summaries and parents' numeracy evenings.

Throughout the school, the children demonstrate a tangible enjoyment of mathematics and mathematics is celebrated purposefully through the display of levelled work from all the classes. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning and teaching across the curriculum. The children are very competent in their use of ICT to support their own learning. They use programmable devices and a range of software from an early stage and, in the best practice, can choose which software programs to use in given tasks. By year 7, the children use ICT very effectively to consolidate and extend their mathematical experience.

In most of the mathematics lessons and play sessions observed during the inspection, the children engaged enthusiastically in a range of challenging activities which consolidated their understanding of key concepts, fostered their use of accurate mathematical language and connected their learning across the curriculum. In discussion with groups of children from years 4 and 7, they demonstrated excellent flexibility in their mathematical thinking. They had very quick recall, high standards of problem solving and reasoning and were secure in all areas of the mathematics curriculum. Overall, the standards achieved by most of the children in mathematics and numeracy, are outstanding.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The good quality long and medium-term planning is well-connected and thematic. The teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of learning and teaching and how to match this to the children's stages of progression. The short-term planning is of a less consistent quality and it is appropriate that the school has begun recently to review how the medium-term planning is translated into more effective short-term plans for learning in order to ensure a more consistent whole-school approach.

In the most effective practice, where the teachers complete regular written evaluations of the planning and of the children's learning, these evaluations are used well to inform future planning for the class as a whole and to meet the needs of groups and individuals. The inspection findings endorse this good practice, which takes account of the quality and extent of the children's responses to the planned learning; these approaches need to be shared across the school.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection most of the teaching observed was good or better and in a majority of the lessons it was very good or outstanding.

The teachers are dedicated, hard-working and focused on the holistic development of each child. In the most effective practice, the teachers build progressively on the children's prior knowledge and set the learning in meaningful, well-connected contexts. In these lessons, the teachers are skilful in maintaining the key focus for learning whilst using every opportunity to promote the development of the children's self management and collaborative working skills. These teachers are insightful in drawing on the children's oral contributions and make creative use of all spontaneous opportunities to extend the children's thinking and learning further.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school uses an appropriate range of assessment strategies in all key stages, including a range of standardised tests to assess the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics. The outcomes from these tests are used to identify those children who would benefit from additional learning support and to set targets for improvement for groups and individual children. The teachers have made a good start to utilising the assessment data in this way. It will be important for the school to expand the analysis and tracking of this data both to inform and evaluate more fully the school's continuous improvement strategies and the impact of the school's provision on the standards the children attain.

In a majority of the classes the teachers make the intended learning explicit for the children to help them have a better understanding of what they need to do to achieve the desired learning outcome. In the most effective practice, the teachers use the plenary sessions well to encourage the children to reflect on the quality and extent of their learning.

In all classes, the teachers respond regularly to the children's written work with supportive oral and written comments. In the most effective practice, the children are provided with appropriate guidance on how to make further improvements to their work and the opportunity to make corrections. There is a need for this good practice to be developed further across the school.

In the FS, the co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need to develop further the planning and assessment methods to record the progression in the children's learning arising from the play experiences.

The parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through parental interviews and a detailed annual written report.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for SEN is very good.

The SENCO provides effective leadership; she gives very good support to the staff and ensures that the school places a high priority on identifying those children who experience difficulties in or have barriers to aspects of their learning. She makes effective use of all available resources to ensure a good blend of flexible and well-targeted provision for specific children in response to their short and medium-term learning needs.

Special educational needs is prioritised appropriately within the school development plan (SDP) and recent actions to improve further the quality of the provision include the implementation of dyslexia friendly strategies in all classes. Good use is made of a range of adaptive ICT programs to support and extend the children's learning.

The staff collaborates well to develop carefully focused short-term IEPs and programmes to meet the children's needs. The records of the IEP reviews, together with the SENCO's analysis of the school's internal data and evaluation of the children's progress in the various support interventions, indicate that the children who require additional assistance are making very good progress overall.

The school has developed good working relationships with a wide variety of external agencies to extend further the types of support it can offer. The Learning Support Assistants (LSA) are deployed effectively and make a very important contribution to the overall provision for SEN. The parents are consulted meaningfully about their children's needs and the support programmes and are kept well-informed about the progress they make.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal has been in post for 17 years. There is a strong sense of openness and collegiality within the school and the Principal plays a key and effective role in facilitating this. He has a highly pastoral approach and models and fosters very affirmative working relationships across the entire school community. He leads the staff team well in supporting all of the children to achieve high standards in their learning and personal development. In turn, his efforts and dedication are highly valued by the children, staff, governors and parents.

All of the co-ordinators demonstrate very good understanding of the children's learning and pastoral needs and support the Principal very well in ensuring continuous improvement across all aspects of the school's provision.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The current SDP outlines a range of appropriate actions to support and improve the educational and pastoral provision for the children.

Within the past two years the school has carried out a number of purposeful audit questionnaires and self evaluation activities to inform the school's improvement plans. The school needs to develop this good work further and use it as the basis for rigorous evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching in order to share and build further upon the good practice already in place.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The staff makes good use of all the indoor space available for learning and teaching, celebrating the children's achievements through very attractive and informative displays. While the teachers in the external mobile classrooms provide stimulating learning environments for the children, the overall quality of the accommodation in these rooms is outdated.

There is a high standard of cleaning and care-taking in the school.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are highly supportive of the Principal and staff at all levels and are kept well informed about all aspects of school life. The school is making careful use of all of the available funding to support learning and teaching. In light of the inspection findings, it will be important for the school to review resource allocation to support the development of effective play-based learning in the outdoor area.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very well-behaved and polite children who demonstrate maturity and enthusiasm in all aspects of their learning and school life;
- the very good quality of the pastoral care provided for the children and the staff, evidenced by the caring, inclusive ethos and the excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the outstanding standards the children achieve in English and Mathematics;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, most of which was good or better and a majority of which was very good or outstanding;
- the well-developed use of ICT and the standards the children attain; and
- the very good, dedicated and hard-working Principal, teaching and support staff who work effectively as a team.

5.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is no vision access from the corridor into a number of the classrooms.
- A risk assessment of the outdoor play area needs to be carried out.

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