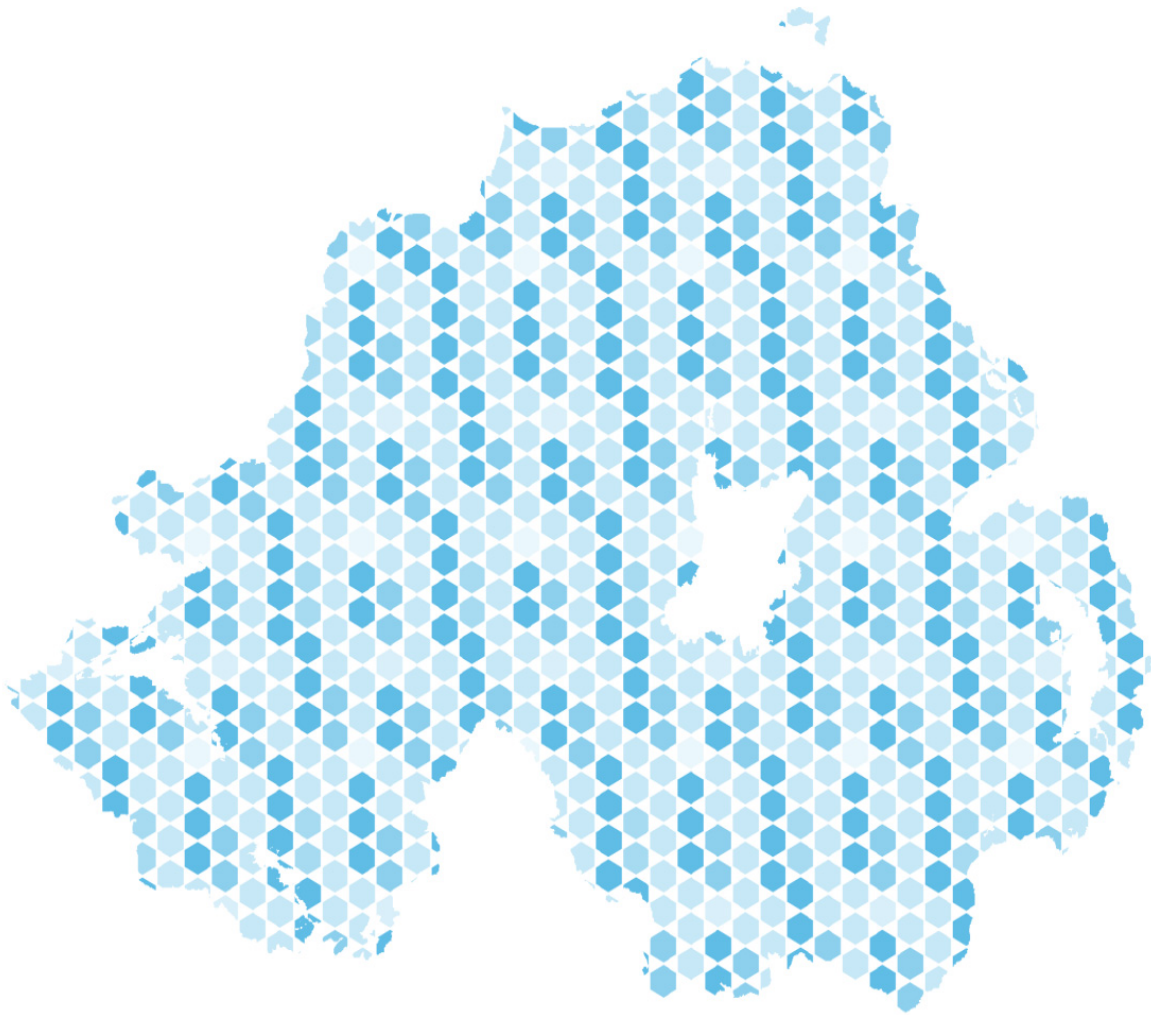


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
Legamaddy

Report of an Inspection
in April 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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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 30/04/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-6455** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	22	27	25	22	19
Enrolments					
Primary	176	176	165	166	165
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): 94.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register: 93.5%

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): 8 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.65 NI PTR: 20.2

iii. Average Class Size: 24

iv. Class Size (Range): 19 to 27

v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:

i. Clerical support:	25
ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:	45
iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support:	65

vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 4.1%

vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 18.93%

viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0

ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 31.4%

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 100%	Mathematics 100%	Irish N/A
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in the Legamaddy area of Downpatrick. The children attend the school from a wide surrounding rural area. The school enrolment has remained steady over the past five years and currently there are 170 children in the school. At the time of inspection, approximately 31% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 20% of the children as requiring support with aspects of their learning, including a very small number of children who have statements of special educational need.

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, and for a group of the children from year 6 to meet with the inspectors.

Of the 116 questionnaires issued to the parents of children at the school, 76 were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 49 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses from the parents were very positive and indicated their appreciation of the work of the staff, the friendly, family ethos and the very good progress made by their children in the school.

Six members of the teachers and six members of the support staff completed the online questionnaire. Almost all of the teaching and support staff made written comments. All of these responses were positive and highlighted the happy school environment and collegial working relationships.

The governors value the work of the school staff; in particular, they commented on the commitment of the staff to the life and work of the school, the high standards achieved by the children and the significant contribution the school makes to the local community.

The small number of issues raised by the parents has been discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

In discussions with the year 6 children, they talked enthusiastically about their learning and the many aspects of school life which they enjoy. The children indicated that they feel safe in the school and are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns regarding their safety or well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The school has a caring ethos and the children experience a wide range of enrichment activities, for example, the school drama productions and the extensive choice of after-school clubs. The children are well-behaved and value the school's effective reward system. The school encourages the children to participate actively in the school council and to develop leadership roles within the school community.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING

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, but the following areas need to be addressed: the governors and senior management team should review the risk assessment for the school site, in particular, the mobile classrooms area; and the school should ensure that all of the support staff are fully aware of the safeguarding procedures.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The staff encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through the healthy breaks, and there are regular opportunities for the children to engage in a wide range of outdoor play and sporting activities.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The children benefit from the school's well-established local and cross-community partnerships, which are integrated effectively to support curricular topic work, including a 'Dissolving Boundaries' project with a school in County Cork. The teachers offer workshops to support the parents with their children's learning. The school has established effective links with local nursery schools and playgroups, and post-primary schools to support the children appropriately as they transfer from and to the next stage of their learning. In addition, the school has strong links with many local community organisations, for example, the Gaelic Athletic Association club and the local community centre.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

In the lessons observed, the children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and engagement in their learning; they are involved actively in the lessons, and are encouraged to extend their responses in class discussions. The children's opinions are valued and they contribute significantly to the planning and evaluation of their own learning; consequently they have a coherent overview of their work. The children work well in pairs, groups and individually; and they demonstrate very good levels of independence with their learning by the end of key stage (KS) 2. In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1, the school has identified appropriately the need to review play-based and activity-based learning, in particular, the planning and provision for outdoor play.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and in mathematics, the school's performance is significantly above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals band, the levels the children attain are well above the average.

The school's internally administered standardised tests show that, in English and mathematics, almost all of the children are achieving at a level in line with, their ability.

The children use ICT competently to support their learning. All of the children by the end of KS2 have achieved level 4 in the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA) accreditation scheme for ICT for the past three years.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for English and literacy is very good.

The planning for literacy across the school at all levels is very good. The co-ordinators review and revise regularly their planning through effective self-evaluative processes. The teachers have realistically high expectations for achievement and they set clear and appropriate targets for the children. The children receive regular feedback on their progress and know how to improve.

The children are developing excellent independent learning skills; they learn well in groups, and are confident at questioning, and challenging each other's views and opinions. The teachers provide the children with very good opportunities to demonstrate their language and communication skills. Peer and self-assessment is well-embedded into the children's interactions with each other; they reflect thoughtfully on their own learning and give constructive comments to their peers on their progress.

There is a well-structured programme in place for the teaching of reading and phonics within the school. In KS1 and 2, the standard of the children's reading is very good. The children in years 4 and 7 are confident, fluent readers, who demonstrate very good understanding of their books across a wide range of contexts. They talk enthusiastically about the extensive range of fiction and non-fiction books which they read at home and in school. The teachers monitor closely the progress the children make with their reading and by the end of year 7, all of the children are reading in line with their ability.

The teachers use effective questioning to encourage the children to develop their comprehension skills, their understanding of characters and the analysis of the text. In KS2, the children enjoy reading and progress to a very high standard. They are guided skilfully by their teachers to improve their reading skills, and they think critically about the topics in their books. The classroom assistants provide effective support through reading partnership programmes for the small number of children who require additional assistance.

The standards attained by the children in writing in the foundation stage, and KS1 and 2 are very good. In the FS, the teachers provide the children with many opportunities to develop initial writing and phonic skills; and the children become independent writers at an early stage. There are very effective visual prompts in the classroom displays, which the children use regularly to support independent writing. In the children's books, there are good examples of extended and independent writing in a range of genres. The children write for a variety of audiences and most of their work is presented to a high standard. In KS2, the children have a competent grasp of grammar and produce imaginative and creative projects, which are celebrated with parents and throughout the school community.

The teachers observed make good use of ICT to support the development of the children's English and literacy skills.

By the end of KS2, the standards achieved by the children in literacy are very good.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The children's mathematical experiences develop systematically through a broad and balanced programme and the work in mathematics links appropriately to class topics. In the FS, the children experience a good range of well-planned practical and oral sessions, which develop progressively the children's ability to: sort; order; understand number; identify pattern and shapes; present information; and gain an understanding of relationships and basic number operations. The teachers provide the children with very good opportunities to explain their ideas, select materials and build up an appropriate mathematical vocabulary.

The effective early mathematical development is built upon successfully in KS1 and KS2. The children develop appropriate mathematical knowledge and skills that facilitate accurate calculating, measuring and presenting of data. They have very good opportunities to apply their learning within familiar and unfamiliar contexts that requires them to reason, explain and present their mathematics with clarity and confidence. In KS2, mathematics-based computer programs are used effectively to consolidate further the children's understanding of important concepts and to extend their skill at problem solving.

By the end of KS2, the higher achieving children have a very good understanding of number operations, can explain well the range of different strategies they use and can solve problems relating to measure, shape and space. In almost all classes, the children focus well on their teachers' explanation of new mathematical concepts. The follow-on work is matched well to the abilities of the children; they experience success and enjoyment in the mathematical activities. The teachers assess regularly the children's mathematical progress; almost all of the children attain standards that are in line with their ability and, for the majority, the standard is very good.

The numeracy co-ordinator provides very good curricular leadership. The mathematics action plans reflect appropriately an analysis of performance data and a review of a range of qualitative information from the teaching staff, such as the children's work and the mathematics planning and classroom observation of the children's learning.

By the end of KS2, the standards achieved by the children in mathematics are very good.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

In the lessons observed, the teachers plan well for their lessons and use their observations of the children's learning to inform future planning. The teachers' strategies for effective differentiation are under-developed in their medium term planning. The literacy and the numeracy co-ordinators implement effective planning and evaluation strategies, which lead to significant improvements in the children's achievement and standards.

3.2 TEACHING

In the lessons observed, most of the teaching was good or better. The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. The teachers use a wide range of practical and creative approaches, including drama, music and art, to engage the children actively in their learning. The skilful classroom assistants support the teachers well in the lessons.

The teachers use effective questioning techniques and facilitate opportunities in lessons for the children to apply these strategies. The use of differentiated questioning by the teachers facilitates all of the children to contribute to the lessons. The positive classroom management strategies, used by most teachers, are effective and guide the children to behave in a considerate manner to the staff and to their peers. The teachers use the children's interests, experiences and topical issues to engage and motivate the children in their learning. In addition, the teachers use regular, effective plenary sessions to consolidate and extend the children's learning.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers, led by the Vice-principal, use an appropriate range of standardised tests and performance data, to analyse and track the children's progress, and to identify accurately, low and underachievement. The teachers use the information on individual and class progress to plan for improvement in the children's achievements. The teachers give the children regular verbal feedback on their progress and on how to improve their work. Most of the teachers mark the children's work regularly with positive comments. The teachers have identified appropriately the need for greater consistency in the effective use of marking for improvement.

The parents are well-informed of their children's progress through two parent teacher meetings and a written report at the end of the school year.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for children identified as requiring additional support with their learning is very good.

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified at an early stage by teacher observation from year 1 and standardised tests from year 2. The class teachers, learning support teacher and special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) contribute constructively to the concise and helpful individual education plans (IEP) for the children with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers make very good use of the IEP in class to guide the differentiated activities. The children's progress is monitored and analysed by the teachers and the SENCO, with the resulting data used to inform further planning and target-setting. The teachers review the IEP regularly with parents and the children.

Additional support for the children in the FS is provided through the 'Forward Together' parental training and support programme. The learning support teacher provides assistance for SEN from year 3, by team teaching within classes, and through highly effective withdrawal sessions for those children who require additional support in English and mathematics. The Reading Partnership support, which is provided for some of the children by trained classroom assistants, is of a very good standard; the children demonstrate good progress in their reading and high levels of self-confidence in their literacy skills.

The school's assessment data demonstrates that nearly all of the children requiring additional support make good progress and are achieving in line with their ability.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Principal and Vice-principal provide very good leadership and management of the school. They value the work of all staff in developing the school curriculum and raising further the standards attained by the children. They have developed a collegial and effective approach to continuous whole-school improvement, which is valued highly by all of the staff and the Board of Governors.

4.1 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Principal and staff have developed systematic self evaluation processes that are well-embedded and highly effective throughout the school.

The school development plan is compliant with the Department of Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The associated action plans are appropriate, well-paced and set achievable targets for whole-school improvement.

4.2 ACCOMMODATION

The school and grounds are well-maintained and there are many displays celebrating the work and achievements of the children. The central resource area in the main school is used well to promote play and learning for the younger children.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The use of resources and the financial management of the school are efficient and effective. The governors are very supportive of the life and work of the school and they regularly discuss the key priorities of the school development plan and the school accommodation.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the highly motivated and confident children, who are involved in planning and evaluating their own learning;
- the quality of the teaching, which in most of the lessons observed was good or better;
- the very good quality of the pastoral care provision, which supports the holistic development of all of the children;
- the very good standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the highly effective leadership and management of the Principal and Vice-principal; and
- the very good co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and SEN provision, leading to the improvement in the children's achievements and standards.

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 a need to review the access arrangements to the mobile classrooms.

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