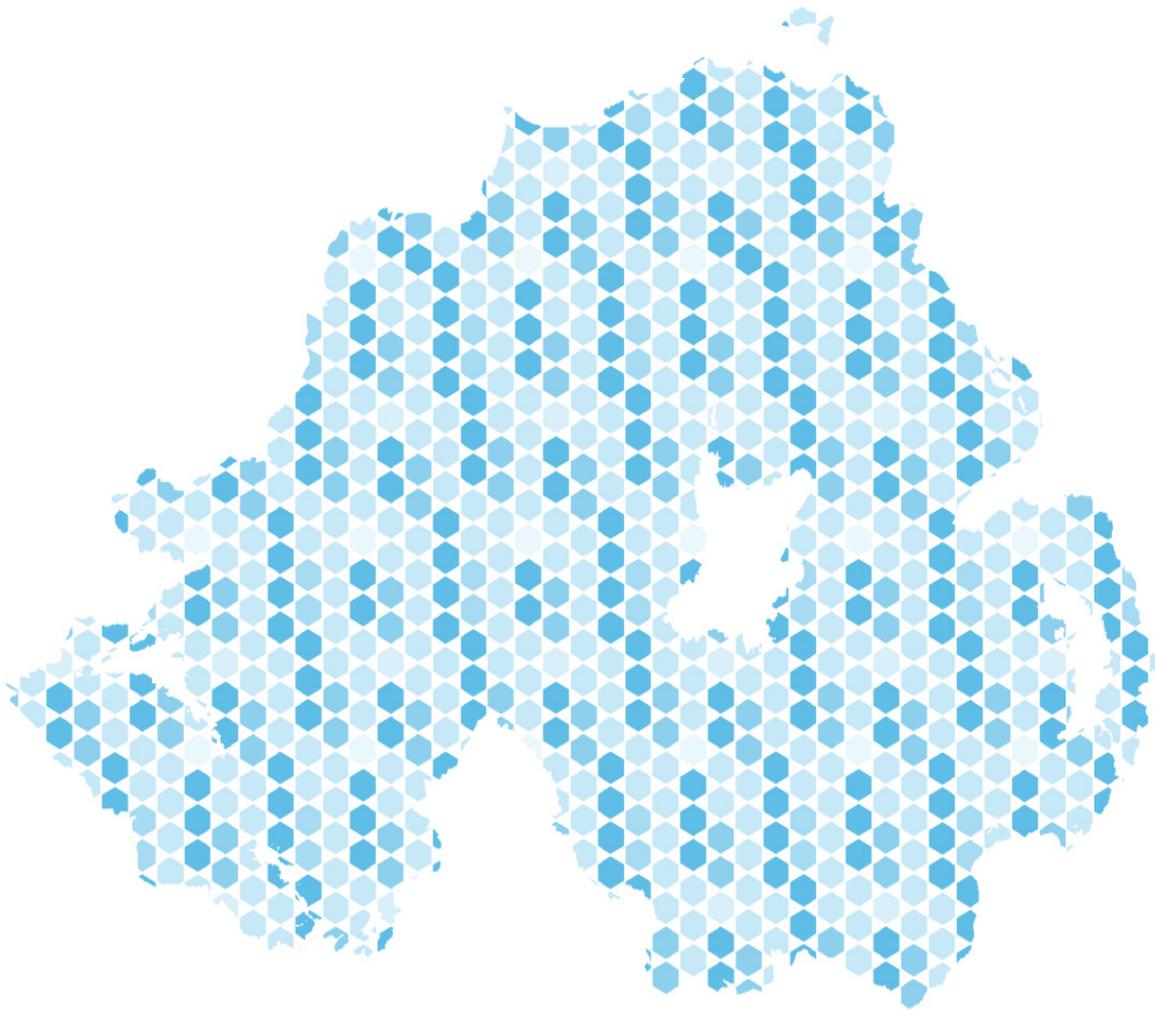


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Waringstown Primary School,  
Co Down

Report of an Inspection  
in April 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



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Waringstown Primary School is situated in the village of Waringstown, County Down. The enrolment has remained steady over the past four years and currently stands at 385. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the village and the surrounding area. Approximately 7% of the children are entitled to free school meals and the school has identified 9% of the children as requiring support with aspects of their learning.

### 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 and the teaching 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 the children from year 6.

Of the 127 questionnaires issued to the parents of children at the school, 70 were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 31 which contained additional written comments. The responses from the parents indicated their appreciation of the high quality teaching, the leadership of the Principal and Vice-principal, the caring ethos, and the professional, dedicated staff. A few issues raised by a small number of the parents have been discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

Sixteen members of the teaching staff and eleven members of the support staff completed the online questionnaire. Ten members of the teaching staff and a small number of the support staff made written comments. All of the responses from the staff were very positive and highlighted their enjoyment of the life and work of the school, including the happy working environment and the care shown by the Principal and Vice-principal for the well being of the staff.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school; in particular, they highlighted the work of the Principal, Vice-principal and staff in bringing about continuous improvement through a strong sense of teamwork and a clear focus on ensuring that all the children make progress in their learning. They acknowledged the high regard for the school in the local community.

The year 6 children talked with pride about their school and in particular, their enjoyment of learning, music, sports and extra-curricular activities. The children reported that they felt happy and safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries.

## 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The Principal fosters a culture of genuine care and respect for one another within the school and values the contributions of all members of the school community. There are excellent working relationships at all levels which contribute to a caring and friendly learning environment for the children. The staff is committed to high standards of learning and teaching to enable each child to reach their full potential and enhance their life chances. The children's personal and social development is enriched through their participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; they experience notable success in sport, music, speech and drama. The children display exemplary behaviour, courtesy and good manners towards others. They have very good opportunities to take on responsibility through, for example, the buddy system and managing the healthy breaks, and their opinions and views are valued.

## 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING

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 child protection 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 through the availability of healthy food choices for break and the inclusion of health-related topics in the curriculum. The children have excellent opportunities to participate in physical activity through a wide range of sporting activities, which encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The links with the parents and with others in the community are strongly focused on enhancing the children's learning. In particular, the school facilitates excellent transitional arrangements with local pre-schools and post-primary schools. Furthermore, the school maintains effective links with local community groups, charities and external agencies.

The parents receive meaningful information about school policies, events and school life through regular newsletters and the informative school website. The school benefits from the additional support and resources provided by the active Parent Teacher Association.

## 2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

### 2.1 LEARNING

The children are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners who take pride in their work. They are self-confident in class discussions and they work well in groups and pairs displaying high levels of initiative and resilience in the completion of investigations and challenging activities. The children's creative and expressive skills are enhanced through the extensive enrichment activities. Consequently, the level of the children's critical thinking and creativity is often outstanding.

The children who receive additional support for their learning in literacy and numeracy make very good progress.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance was well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and also the average for schools in the same free school meals band.

## 2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy co-ordinators provide highly effective leadership, support and guidance. They work collaboratively to monitor and review the provision and have a clear vision for the ongoing development of literacy which is focused on improving further the learning experiences provided for and the standards achieved by the children.

A key strength of the provision is the skilful and creative holistic development of the children's talking and listening, reading and writing in meaningful and stimulating contexts across all areas of the curriculum.

By the end of KS 2, the children have excellent talking and listening skills. They engage and interact with their peers and adults confidently through paired, group and whole-class discussions. They present their views maturely and, in keeping with the school's ethos, listen respectfully to and value the opinions and contributions of others.

The children have benefited from the recent focus on developing reading, and this is evident in their confidence and fluency in reading and their high level of understanding. They are familiar with and speak enthusiastically about a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and authors; the older children share their love of reading with the younger children through the carefully planned 'reading buddies' programme. The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children are reading at a level at least commensurate with their age.

The overall standard of the children's writing is excellent. Across the three key stages, the children write for a variety of audiences and purposes and write with increasing accuracy, independence and proficiency as they progress through the year groups. Their work is celebrated in attractive and stimulating displays in the classrooms and corridors, and the teachers provide supportive feedback to acknowledge the children's efforts and attainments.

## 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The numeracy co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. The ongoing development of the provision for mathematics and numeracy continues to be prioritised within the School Development Plan (SDP). The mathematics action plan focuses appropriately on improving further the quality of the mathematics provision.

The comprehensive programme for mathematics, which is currently being further refined, provides appropriate guidance for the teachers to plan effectively for a balanced coverage of the mathematics curriculum.

In all classes, the mathematics lessons incorporate an appropriate range of teaching approaches and practical activities. The adults use a very good range of engaging resources skilfully to support and extend the learning and teaching. The planned activities are matched well to all the children's needs. There are very good opportunities for the

children to work collaboratively in meaningful mathematical tasks which link creatively to other curriculum areas, including the development of their financial capability. Throughout the school, the children can talk confidently about their learning using accurate mathematical language.

The children work with enthusiasm and enjoyment, particularly during mental mathematics and practical sessions. In the FS and KS1, the children gain a very good understanding of number and basic number operations and other mathematical concepts and present their work in an appropriate range of forms. The highest attaining children in year 4 and year 7 have an excellent working knowledge of important concepts such as estimation, measures and shape and space. They respond with high levels of confidence and are very flexible in their mathematical thinking.

By the end of KS2, almost all of the children have an excellent understanding in mathematics and are able to apply their learning well in a variety of contexts.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The quality of the teachers' medium-term planning to support the learning and teaching is very good. They plan collaboratively, flexibly and creatively to ensure the children progress in their learning and in their thinking skills and personal capabilities. The children benefit from the teachers' planning for connected learning through the use of interesting, engaging and relevant topics from the World Around Us and the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme.

Increasingly, the teachers are using their evaluations of the children's learning to inform future planning. The teachers use a wide range of information available to them to create effective individual education plans for the children with special educational needs which include agreed and carefully considered targets across a range of areas.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

The quality of learning and teaching in the lessons observed was always good or better; in three-quarters of the lessons it was very good or outstanding. The teachers are conscientious and hard working. They have high expectations and use skilful questioning to build on the children's prior learning and to prompt extended responses. They create a climate for learning in which the children are encouraged to ask questions and are willing to take risks. They use educational trips, external visitors, and real-life contexts to inspire, enrich and challenge the children in their learning.

The teachers use ICT effectively to stimulate the children's interest and build their knowledge of concepts and ideas through, for example, the use of a range of good quality interactive software and programmable devices.

The teachers who provide additional withdrawal support in literacy and numeracy have detailed knowledge of the needs of the children who come to them, and they provide outstanding individualised intervention in highly motivating surroundings, often using high quality, personalised, in-house resources. The liaison across the school amongst the class teachers, classroom assistants and the withdrawal teachers is very effective. At all times, through careful planning and communication, the teachers support the children in an inclusive manner

### 3.3 ASSESSMENT

The quality of the arrangements for the assessment of the children's learning is very good. Through the school's effective whole-school assessment processes, the teachers use a good range of tests to gather information about attainment and to enable early intervention in numeracy and literacy support to be made. This information is used well by the teachers to set individual targets and to identify key areas for development.

The teachers mark the children's written work highly conscientiously and regularly; the feedback is positive and affirming and frequently displays detailed individual knowledge of the children's interests and personalities.

There are very effective procedures in place to keep the parents well informed about their children's progress, including the annual written report, two formal parent teacher meetings and informal contact between the teachers and parents as the need arises. The annual written report provides a broad, comprehensive and holistic evaluation of the children's progress.

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.

The Principal and Vice-principal provide outstanding leadership and management of the school through a clear focus on promoting high quality learning and teaching. The Principal who has been in post for 21 years inspires confidence, respect and loyalty from the staff, parents and governors. He provides exemplary pastoral support for his staff and he has high expectations for meeting the individual needs of all the children. The Principal and Vice-principal promote a distributed style of leadership and management effectively through the opportunities given to co-ordinators. As a result of the co-ordinators receiving appropriate training and time for their development work, they provide highly effective leadership and management.

### 4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's development planning process is underpinned by a culture of self-evaluation and reflection at all levels in order to bring about improvement. The SDP which complies with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland 2005 Order, has been agreed and contributed to at all levels and is supported by a well-structured staff development programme. This programme includes an effective balance between the use of external facilitators and the dissemination of effective practice within the school. Staff meetings are used well to provide the staff with opportunities to reflect on the use of innovative strategies to develop high quality learning experiences for the children.

### 4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The children benefit from the stimulating learning environment which is used effectively and efficiently to meet their curricular, pastoral and social needs. The children's work is celebrated through highly creative displays in the classrooms and corridors. The school building and surrounding grounds are maintained to a high standard.

#### 4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are very knowledgeable about the life and work of the school and they play a strategic role in the school's development through their expertise in finance, administration and links with the community. They support the Principal well in the management of the school's budget allocation. As a result, the school is well resourced to support learning and teaching, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the highly motivated, well-mannered children who engage enthusiastically in their learning;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral provision which reflects the ethos of the school and the excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the outstanding standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy and their wider achievements;
- the very good or outstanding quality of the teaching in three-quarters of the lessons observed;
- the outstanding quality of the broad and balanced curriculum provision; and
- the outstanding leadership and management of the Principal and the Vice-principal supported effectively by the co-ordinators and all the staff.

5.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The quality of the fencing around the outdoor play area needs to be reviewed.

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