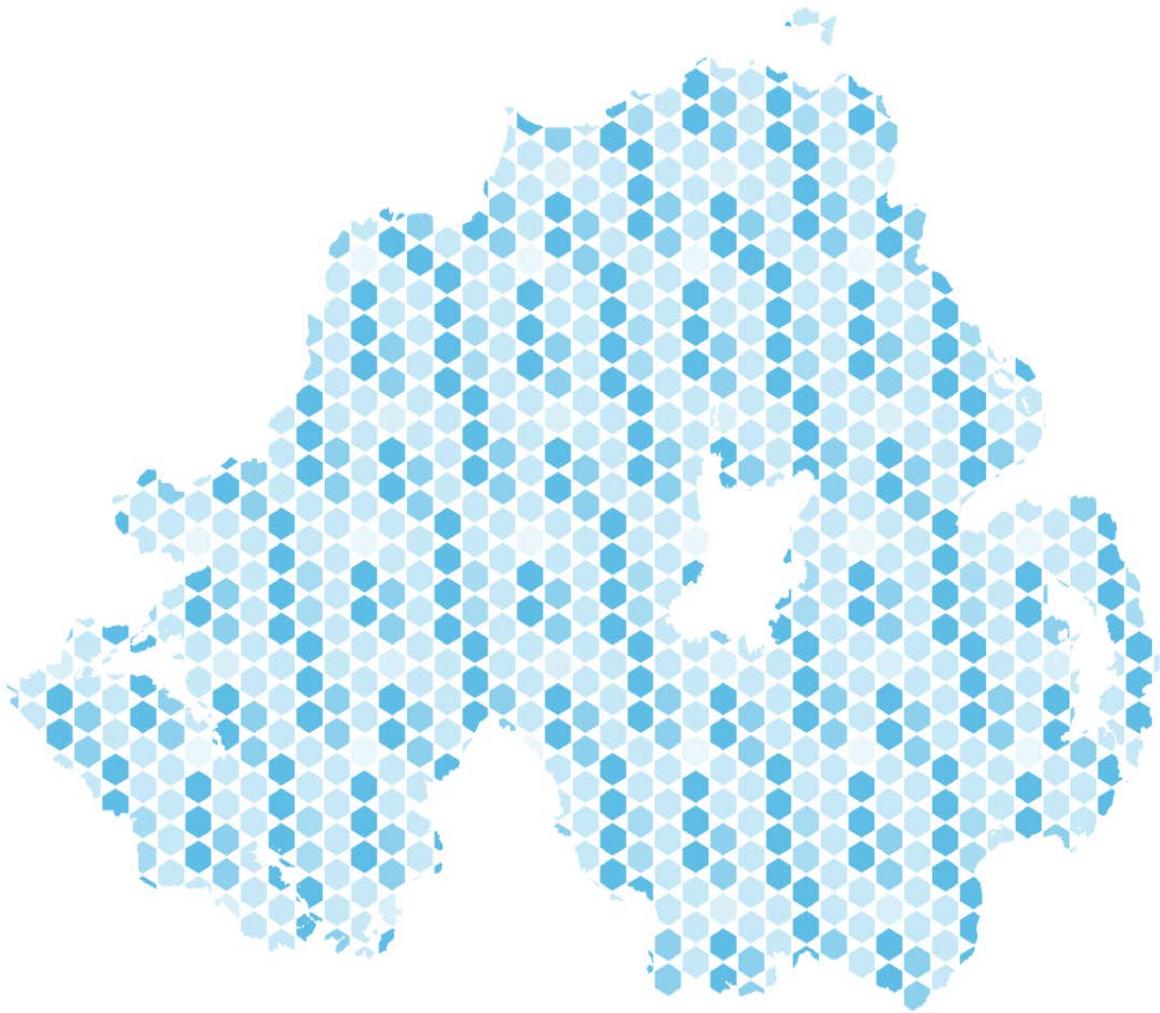


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Artigarvan Primary School and
Community Nursery Unit,
Strabane

Report of an Inspection
in February 2013



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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Artigarvan Primary School and Community Nursery Unit is situated in the village of Artigarvan, just over three miles from Strabane in County Tyrone. The enrolment has declined over the last five years in line with falling trends in the local area and currently stands at 130, which includes 26 children attending part-time in the nursery unit. The children come from the village and the wider surrounding area. The percentage of children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) has increased significantly and at the time of the inspection stood at 39%.

The school has experienced challenging staffing issues over the past school year; at the time of the inspection the Principal and Vice-principal were absent and of the six teachers present during the inspection in the school four were permanent job-share members of staff; the nursery unit teacher was appointed on a temporary contract in November, 2012.

This inspection completes the work that began in May 2012. The inspection was incomplete at that stage due to industrial action being taken by the staff not to co-operate with the Education and Training Inspectorate on advice from their teaching union.

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

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in the school and the nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the progress of the school and nursery unit in addressing the areas for improvement.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards in the school and the nursery unit is satisfactory.

- In numeracy most of the children are making progress and achieving **standards** that are in line with their age and ability. The children have a sound understanding of key mathematical concepts including number operations, money, shape and space. They are less confident in thinking flexibly and explaining the strategies they use. The school has identified the need to develop further the children's problem-solving and investigation skills in mathematics. In literacy, a majority of the children achieve standards in line with their age and ability. The children have begun to write for a widening range of audiences and purposes however, their talking, listening, and reading skills are underdeveloped

across the school. It is appropriate to review the breadth and balance of the literacy programme to ensure progression from the nursery unit to year one and to integrate more fully the children's talking and listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum in all key stages in the school.

- The children's work on display around the school celebrates their learning and shows that they have developed a range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Due to the staff changes the school postponed the entry of the children to the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation Scheme.
- Most of the children identified with **special educational needs** are making satisfactory progress in their learning. They are integrated well into all aspects of school life.
- In the **nursery unit**, the children are developing self-help skills including self-registering using their names and symbols and tidying away their own work. Most of the children can sustain their interest in their chosen activities and listen attentively during the group story session. Many of the children make good representational drawings and paintings. A small number of the children have difficulty sharing and taking turns.

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning in the school and the nursery unit is satisfactory.

- The **children's** behaviour is excellent; they co-operate well with their teachers, with one another and are welcoming to visitors. When given the opportunity the children engage purposefully in their learning.
- The **quality of the teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to very good with most of the teaching being satisfactory. In the most effective practice the teaching is well-paced, the teachers make effective use of ICT and use relevant and meaningful contexts to motivate and engage the children. In most of the teaching observed, expectations are too low, there are missed opportunities to extend the children's language and learning, and the teachers rely too heavily on low level questioning which limits the opportunities for the children to develop their responses. The school needs to review the quality of the planning and provision for play-based learning, including the use of daily routines to promote more effectively the children's language and literacy and early mathematical skills. Across the school, the interaction between the teachers and the children needs to be of a consistently high standard to engage the children more productively in their learning.
- Over one-third of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and have been placed on the **special educational needs** register. The support staff build the children's confidence and self-esteem in a sensitive manner both in class and through the withdrawal sessions. Many of the children's identified needs could be managed through more effective settling-in arrangements, positive behaviour management strategies and well planned in-class provision which is more closely matched to individual needs.

- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is good. This is evident through the inclusive ethos and the good working relationships between the children, their teachers and support staff. The children benefit from the opportunities to take on positions of responsibility through, for example, caring for the younger children in the playground and enhancing the school environment. The links with other schools and the local community are used well to develop the children's social skills and mutual understanding.
- The school gives good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity**. The promotion of healthy breaks and the children's participation in a range of physical activities encourages them to adopt healthy lifestyles. The programme particularly at key stage 2 supports very well the children self awareness about making healthy choices. In the nursery unit and foundation stage (FS), more use could be made of the snack routines to develop a wider range of learning and skills, and to heighten the children's awareness of healthy eating.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management in the school and the nursery unit is inadequate.

- The staff and governors have been faced with a number of significant staff changes over the last four years, which have impacted on the quality of the leadership and management. The teachers have worked conscientiously and flexibly to try to minimise the impact on the children's learning and some have taken on additional roles and responsibilities.
- Under the direction of the Western Education and Library Board the school entered a programme of support to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. The staff have begun to use performance data to identify low and underachieving children. It will be important that they continue to develop the use of performance data and assessment information in a more effective manner to inform learning and teaching across the school in order to raise the children's standards and achievements. The school's processes for effective **self-evaluation and school development planning** are underdeveloped. The staff will need to develop a more systematic and collegial approach to self-evaluation and development planning which is focused more strategically on raising further the children's achievements and standards.
- The **governors** are supportive of the development of the school and the nursery unit. They have recently accessed training in benchmarking the school's literacy and numeracy standards against those of similar schools in Northern Ireland and have engaged with all the staff on the school development plan. It is appropriate that they develop and sustain these processes for self-evaluation and review the roles and responsibilities of the staff to ensure that the needs of all the children are met.
- 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. The school has identified the need to update the training in

safeguarding for the designated governor and provide a named person for the parents to approach in the nursery unit. The school needs to review its policies and update the safeguarding information to include consultation with the parents and the children.

CONCLUSION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in the school and the nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop a more strategic and collegial approach to monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning in the school and nursery unit;
- plan more coherently in the nursery unit and FS to ensure that all staff interaction develops the children's learning and development through play more effectively; and
- improve the quality and consistency of the curricular planning , teaching and learning in order to raise further the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the progress of the school and nursery unit in addressing the areas for improvement.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Artigarvan Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 26/02/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 201-6068** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	14	13	9	20	21
Enrolments					
Primary	134	122	109	108	104
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	27	25	27	26	26
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): 96.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 95.2%

Primary & Reception Nursery Unit Special Unit Irish Medium Unit

- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 6 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.8 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 26
- iv. Class Size (Range): to
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
 i. Clerical support: 30
 ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 15
 iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 60
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.3%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 38.5%
- viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 39.4%
- 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**

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ARTIGARVAN COMMUNITY NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	0
Under 3 years of age*	5	0
With statement of SEN**	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	9	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	7.7%
Average attendance for the previous year.	91.9%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2¾ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	0	1
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	1

Number of: ****	
Students	3
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	54%
Number of written comments	6

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, (SUPPORT STAFF) AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the questionnaires issued to the parents in the school, 37 (52%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 16 which contained additional written comments. In addition, fourteen (54%) questionnaires were returned from parents of children in the nursery unit, with six including additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school and the nursery unit. In particular they commented on how happy and well-settled their children are in school, the care and support provided by the teaching and non-teaching staff, and the good communications between the school, the nursery unit and the parents. In addition, a group of parents who had completed questionnaires, asked to meet with the inspection team and reiterated their positive written comments.

The staff responded very positively to the confidential questionnaires; through their comments they expressed appreciation for the work of the acting-Principal. A summary of the findings and the written comments were shared with the governors and the acting-Principal.

Representatives of the governors met with the inspection team; they expressed their support for the work of the staff and highlighted the school's close links with the local community and reported concerns about the challenges facing the school at this point in time

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children; they talked about the aspects of school life they enjoy including the active role they have in the playground squad, the eco-group and the school council. They reported that they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have any concerns about their safety or wellbeing.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The arrangements for access to the school grounds are hazardous and require careful traffic management.
- The external door to the dining hall is faulty and was often bolted during the inspection. The acting-Principal reported that it is being fixed.

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