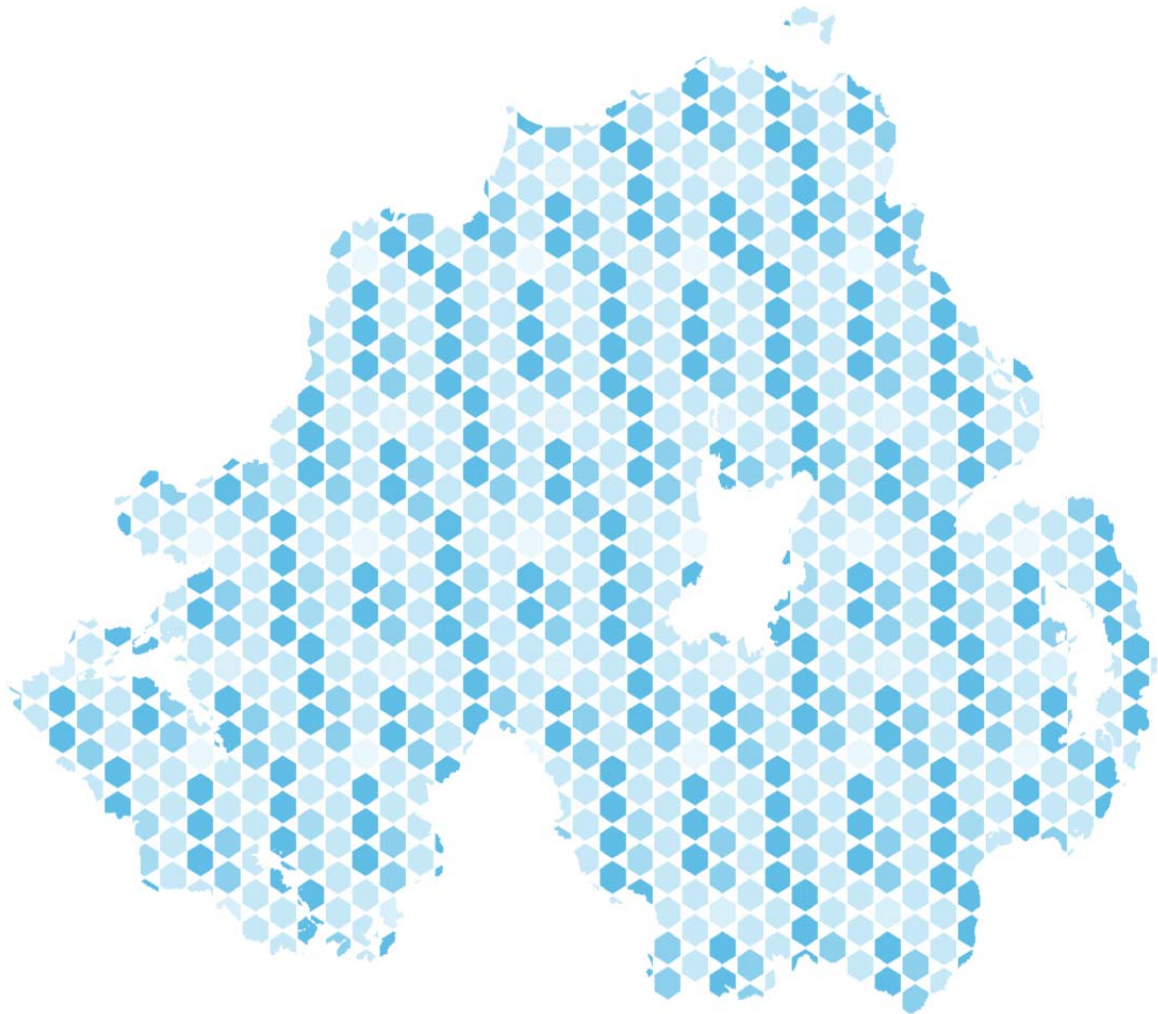


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballykeigle Primary School,
Comber

Report of an Inspection
in May 2010

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, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

BALLYKEIGLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, COMBER, NEWTOWNARDS, CO DOWN, BT23 5SD (401-1647)

CONTEXT

Ballykeigle Primary School is located in a rural site between Comber and Ballygowan. The enrolment has decreased over the past four years from 59 in 2006/07 and currently stands at 47. At the time of the inspection, none of the children were entitled to free school meals and approximately 25% of the children were identified as having difficulty with aspects of their learning.

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 29 questionnaires issued to the parents, nine (30%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch (ISB), including four which contained an additional written comment. All of the parental questionnaires and written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the provision in the school; in particular the parents highlighted the caring, friendly learning environment and the approachability and hard work of both the teaching and non-teaching staff. The teachers' responses, including one written comment, were wholly positive. Three support staff also responded positively with comments that highlighted the friendly and family atmosphere and the sense of team work within the school. The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children. They spoke very positively about the school and reported that they felt happy and secure and knew where to seek help if they have a concern.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. Among the strengths are the supportive ethos, the systems in place to promote positive behaviour and the strong parental involvement in the life and work of the school. The children respond well to the staff's expectations; their behaviour is exemplary. The classroom assistants contribute significantly to promoting and maintaining a pleasant, stimulating working environment for the children.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school needs to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to cover the leave of the Designated Teacher, and to consult with the parents as policies and procedures are revised.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children have a healthy break each day. They also benefit from regular access to a newly developed outdoor adventure play area.

The strengths of the school include:

- the caring and inclusive atmosphere that permeates the school;
- the quality of the teaching which was good in half of the lessons observed;

- the quality of the provision for those children requiring additional support with their learning;
- the effective support provided by the classroom assistants; and
- the strong support of the parents and the wider community.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the Principal to adopt a rigorous and systematic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching;
- to review and revise curricular responsibilities and update whole school planning, in particular for English and mathematics; and
- to make more effective use of available data to inform the school development plan and to set more focused targets to improve standards in both English and mathematics across the school.

CONCLUSION

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

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