

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Caolan's Primary School,  
Saintfield

Report of an Inspection  
in January 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:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Caolan's Primary School is situated in the village of Darragh Cross, in the parish of Saintfield and Carrickmannon. The school has recently celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary; the foundation stage class is in the original building, while the other year groups occupy a new suite of rooms, built in 2006. In the last four years the enrolment has risen from 61 to 67 children, who come from a wide rural area. At the time of the inspection 16% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 19% of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. This inspection completed 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 teachers' 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, including the school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

## OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

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.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### Achievements and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.

- All of the **children** are highly motivated and display positive attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary. They interact well in paired or group activities and benefit from the many opportunities to work independently.
- In English and mathematics, almost all of the children attain very good **standards** in line with their ability. They display a high level of enjoyment, fluency and understanding in their reading; their oral and written communication is of a consistently high standard. They demonstrate flexibility in their mathematical thinking and confidence in problem-solving and investigative activities.
- The children identified as having **special educational needs** make very good progress and achieve standards in line with their ability. They are able to work confidently alongside their peers.

## Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is very good.

- The **teaching** observed ranged from good to outstanding, with the majority of the teaching being very good. The teachers' planning is consistently detailed and thorough; the lessons are well structured, appropriately paced and clearly differentiated to meet the needs of all of the children. Assessment is used effectively to track the children's progress and address under-achievement.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is outstanding. The children's needs are identified early and a variety of appropriate strategies is in place, including effective literacy withdrawal sessions and a Reading Partnership programme which meet the children's needs very well.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is outstanding. Among the strengths are: the inclusive and nurturing ethos; the focus on the holistic development of each child; and the excellent working relationships at all levels in the school.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity** through, for example, the healthy breaks initiative and the many opportunities for physical activity in timetabled sessions and extra-curricular activity.

## Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The **Principal** leads the school very effectively and is strongly supported by the Vice-principal. She sets high standards and has developed a collegial ethos in which all members of the school community are valued. She communicates clearly with the Board of Governors, the parents, the staff and the children.
- The whole-school **self-evaluation** and **school development planning** processes are very good. The senior management team is developing effectively a self-evaluative culture and has identified appropriate areas for further school improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for **safeguarding** children which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors, and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

## CONCLUSION

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.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** St Caolan's Primary iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 07/01/13  
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 403-1485 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Short

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	9	11	8	11	11
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	62	61	65	66	67
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): 96.1% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the  
 Special Educational Needs Register: 96.1%
- |   | Primary &<br>Reception | Nursery<br>Unit    | Special<br>Unit | Irish Medium<br>Unit |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| D. i. Number of Teachers<br>(including the principal and part-time teachers):<br>(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)   | 4.3                    | 0                  | 0               | 0                    |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):  | 15.6:1                 | NI PTR: 20.2       |                 |                      |
| iii. Average Class Size:  | 17                     |                    |                 |                      |
| iv. Class Size (Range):   | 11 to 22               |                    |                 |                      |
| v. Ancillary Support:<br>Number of Hours <b>Per Week:</b>   |                        |                    |                 |                      |
| i. Clerical support:  |                        |                    | 15              |                      |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom<br>Assistant Support:  |                        |                    | 19              |                      |
| iii. Additional hours of other<br>classroom assistant support:  |                        |                    | 15              |                      |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:  |                        |                    | 1.5%            |                      |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:  |                        |                    | 19%             |                      |
| viii. Number of children who are <b>not</b> of statutory school age:  |                        |                    | 0               |                      |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:   |                        |                    | 16%             |                      |
| x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11<br>who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics,<br>and Irish (in Irish-medium schools): | English<br>90%         | Mathematics<br>90% | Irish<br>N/A    |                      |

### **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 50 questionnaires issued to the parents, 26 (52%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 11 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents expressed their appreciation of the inclusive and nurturing ethos in which their children are making good progress; the school's place at the heart of the community; the approachable and supportive staff; and the leadership of the Principal. The key messages from all of the questionnaires have been shared with the Principal and a representative of the Board of Governors.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 and 7 children; they spoke very positively about their teachers, their learning and the many aspects of school life which they enjoy. They reported that they felt safe in school and were fully aware of what to do if they had any concerns regarding their work, safety or well-being.

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