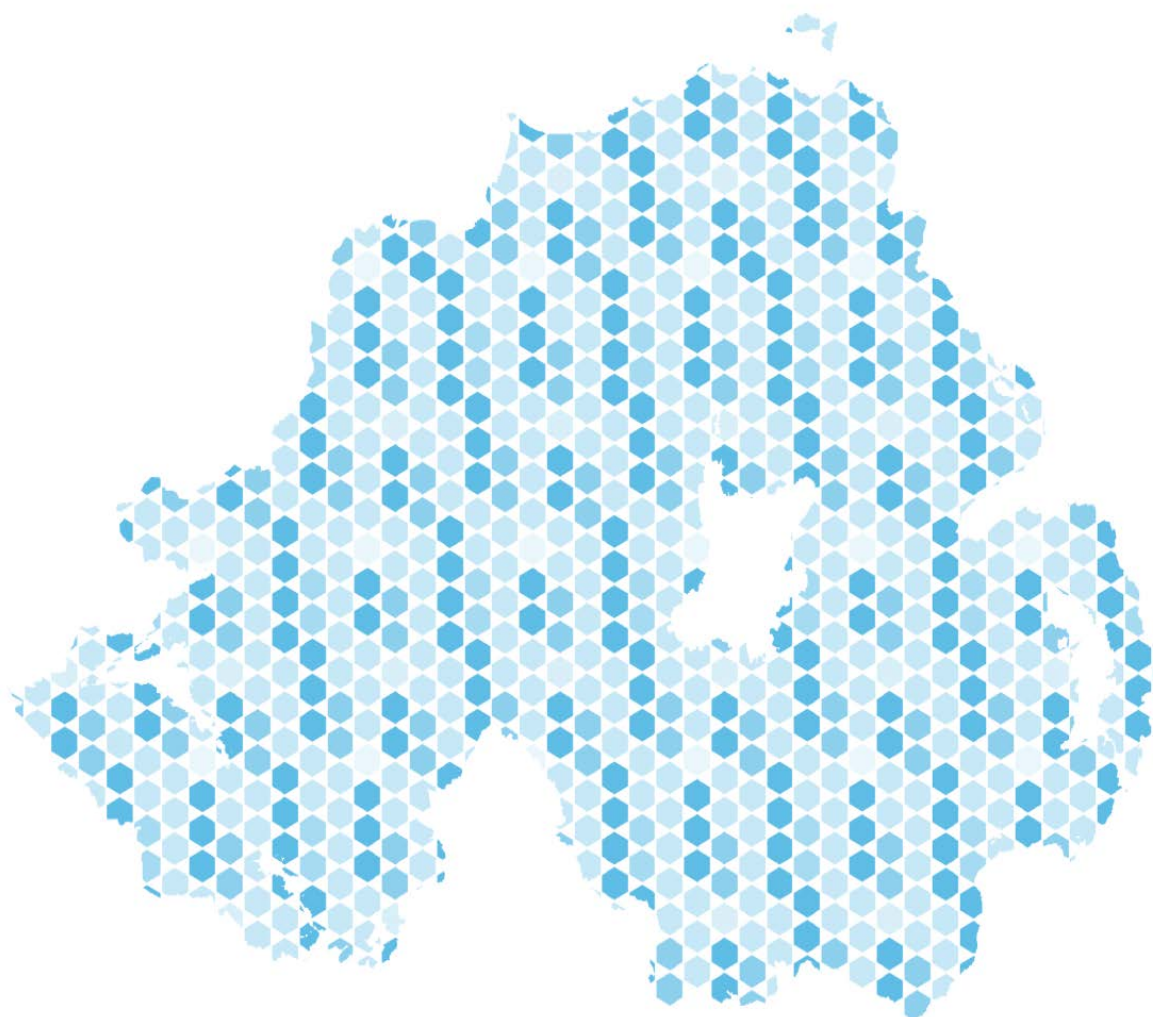


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Columba's Primary School  
Clady, Strabane

Report of an Inspection  
in April 2013



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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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 Columba's Primary School is situated in the village of Clady, about five miles south-west of Strabane in County Tyrone. Most of the children come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The school's enrolment has increased steadily in recent years and is currently 123. Thirteen reception age children are enrolled in the year one class. Approximately 20% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 12% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

## 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 FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

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.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### Achievements and Standards

**The quality of the children's achievements and standards is outstanding.**

- In English and mathematics, almost all of the children attain **standards** which are in line with their ability or above expectation. The children write well for a wide range of purposes and audiences; they read with very good fluency and increasing understanding. In mathematics, the children work together supportively and have a thorough grasp of important mathematical concepts. The reception children are at ease in their learning environment and interact confidently with the adults and other children; overall, they are progressing well. In all classes, a key attribute of the children's success is the high level of creativity, organisation and pride with which they approach all aspects of their learning and school life. This is evident in, for example, the excellent quality art and design work they produce and exhibit both inside and beyond the school and their continuing high achievements in the school's Eco work, public speaking and drama.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** (SEN) in the school are making excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and personal development both in relation to their identified needs and in line with their potential.

- By the end of key stage two, all of the children achieve high standards in **information and communication technology**; they are competent in using their skills across a good range of learning activities.

### **Provision for Learning**

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

- Throughout the school, the **children** are very well-motivated to learn; their behaviour is exemplary and they settle enthusiastically to their work in class.
- During the inspection, the quality of the **teaching** observed was always good or better and a significant minority was very good or outstanding. Where the teaching is of the best quality, the children's individual needs are met fully and every child attains the highest standard possible. The teachers' planning, assessment and record-keeping of the children's progress are detailed, systematic and rigorous. The whole staff team work together tirelessly and make effective use of others to improve continuously the breadth and quality of the children's learning experiences and skills.
- The school's provision for **special educational needs** is high-quality and proactive in responding to the learning profile of each individual child. The effective range of additional support provided, including the impact of the well-skilled learning assistants, matches the children's requirements well and has a positive impact on the progress they make in their learning and in building their self-esteem.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** in the school is outstanding. There are excellent relationships at all levels and a strongly child-centred and caring family ethos permeates all aspects of the school's provision. It is evident also in the thoughtful ways in which the staff have developed a carefully considered learning environment in the internal and outdoor spaces; this contributes further to the children's emotional, creative, and physical wellbeing and development.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity** through, for example, the provision of a good range of physical activities including the one kilometre walk for morning exercise and games areas, the varied healthy breaks and effective use of curriculum topics to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

### **Leadership and Management**

**The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.**

- The teaching **Principal** provides excellent strategic leadership and management. In all aspects of school life, she has a well-informed vision which is shared and agreed with the rest of the staff, whom she leads by example and who, in turn, provide high standards of support in bringing about continuous improvement.

- The whole-school **self-evaluation and school development planning** processes are of a very high quality. The school development plan and associated action plans identify a relevant range of areas for whole-school improvement. There is a well-established culture of collaborative self-evaluation, committed teamwork and careful planning and organisation, all of which focus sharply on enriching and improving the provision and raising further the children's standards and achievements across all aspects of their learning.
- 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 relevant department.

## CONCLUSION

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.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Columba's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 17/04/13**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-2730** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	8	21	22	19	12
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	94	98	108	105	123
Reception	6	7	8	5	13
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): 96.8% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 97%

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): 5 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 24 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 24
- iv. Class Size (Range): 20 to 27
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 15 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 45 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 20 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0.8%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 12.4%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 13
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 20.3%
- 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 | Mathematics | Irish |
|---------|-------------|-------|
| 83%     | 83%         | N/A   |
- xi. If there is a composite class with reception children in it, please indicate the numbers of children in the other year groups:
- | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 12     | 0      | 0      |

**THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN**

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection, as well as a meeting with the year 6 and 7 children. The inspection team also met with a small group of parents.

Eighty two questionnaires were issued to the parents of the children in the primary school; 47 (57.3%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 26 contained additional written comments.

All of the teachers and support staff completed the online questionnaire and included written comments.

Almost all of the responses from the questionnaires returned were highly positive and the written comments praised the quality of the school's caring, family ethos and the emphasis placed by the school on providing an extended and enriching range of learning experiences for the children.

The year 6 and 7 children reported that they feel very secure and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns or worries about their well-being and safety.

The Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the responses from the questionnaires.

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