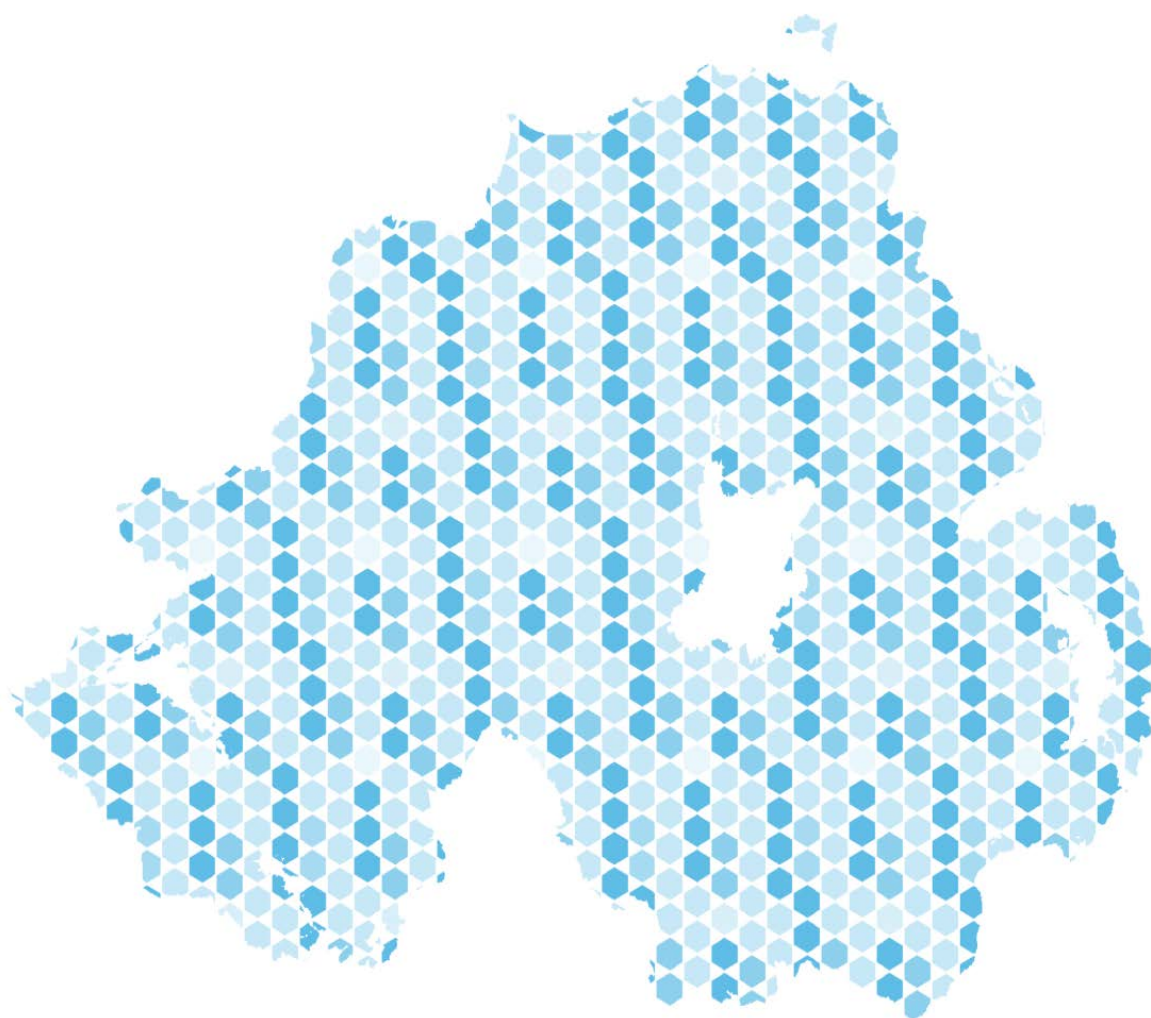


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School and
Magheradroll Nursery Unit,
Ballynahinch

Report of an Inspection
in March 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

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in the centre of Ballynahinch. In the last four years the enrolment has risen from 184 to 205 children who come from the town and the local rural area. At the time of the inspection 41% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 35% of the children who require 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 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 overall quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.

- The **children's** behaviour is excellent. They are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in their learning. They work independently and interact well with their peers and adults and talk with confidence about what they are learning.
- By the end of key stage 2, almost all of the children make steady progress and attain **standards** in line with their ability. They apply their mathematical thinking in everyday contexts and use with confidence a range of strategies to solve problems and carry out investigations. The children read with fluency, understanding and a high level of enjoyment; they communicate well verbally and write competently for a range of audiences and purposes. Most of the children attain the expected standards in ICT.
- Almost all of the children identified as having **special educational needs** make good progress in reaching their identified targets. In class they integrate well with their peers and participate fully in all activities.
- Most of the children in the nursery unit are well-settled, highly motivated and happy to talk about their learning activities. During the inspection, they showed a good understanding of early mathematical concepts; they were able to sort, match and count independently. Most of the children are attempting to write their own names and there is evidence that they are developing appropriate attention to detail in their early representational drawings and paintings.

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is very good.

- The **teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with the majority being very good or outstanding. The teachers' planning builds effectively on the children's previous learning; in most cases their evaluations inform the next stage in teaching and learning for individuals and groups in the class. The teachers' oral and written comments on the children's work clearly identify how the children can make improvements.
- In the nursery unit, the planning outlines an appropriate programme for the children, designed to foster their all-round development. It identifies many facets of learning inherent in the various aspects of play. The development of the children's language and communication skills and of their understanding of early mathematical concepts is a particular strength of the nursery unit's provision. The dedicated staff work effectively as a team.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is outstanding. The children's needs in literacy and numeracy are identified early and a range of well-targeted support is provided in class and in withdrawal sessions. The classroom assistants are deployed effectively to support the children in their learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is outstanding. There is a highly inclusive ethos characterised by mutual respect and excellent working relationships at all levels. The children are involved practically in decision making through the active school council.
- The school and nursery unit give very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity** through, for example, encouraging the children to eat healthy breaks and to use a very good range of play equipment at break and lunchtime.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The **Principal** provides effective leadership and is very well supported by the Vice-principal. They set high standards and have established a collegial ethos among the staff, with an appropriate focus on building the capacity of middle managers and raising standards further. The senior management team has established very good channels of communication throughout the school, with the parents and with the governors.
- The whole-school **self-evaluation** and **school development planning** processes are very good. There is a clear focus on developing further a self-evaluative culture; the action plans are effective and identify the appropriate areas for school improvement. The school development plan will have to be adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the school and nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for **safeguarding** children which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school and nursery unit 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 Patrick's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 20/03/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-1665** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	29	26	29	41	26
Enrolments					
Primary	203	188	184	207	207
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52	52
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): 93.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 92.7%

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): 11 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.6 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 22.8
- iv. Class Size (Range): 19 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
 i. Clerical support: 30
 ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 55
 iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 85
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.9%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 35.1%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 41.9%
- 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 87%** **Mathematics 87%** **Irish N/A**

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON MAGHERADROLL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	26
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	5
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	2
With English as an additional language	2	3

* On 1 July.

** 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.	21.2%
Average attendance for the previous year.	86.6%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2 hours 35 mins	2 hours 35 mins

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	2

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	27%
Number of written comments	5

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 104 questionnaires issued to the parents of children in the primary school, 51 (49%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch (ISB), including 24 which contained additional written comments. Of the 52 questionnaires issued to parents of children in the nursery unit, 14 (27%) were returned to ISB, including five written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school and nursery unit. In the written comments, the parents expressed their appreciation of: the very good communication between the school and home, in particular, the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning; the staff's commitment to the children's progress and holistic development; the effective focus on positive behaviour; and the leadership of the Principal. Twenty-six members of staff responded to the staff questionnaires; their responses were almost all positive. The key messages from all of the questionnaires have been shared with the Principal and a representative of the governors.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children. They spoke positively about: the support provided by their teachers; their active participation in the school council; the reward system which effectively promotes good behaviour; and the wide range of extra-curricular activities which they enjoy. They reported that they feel safe in school and are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work, safety or well-being.

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