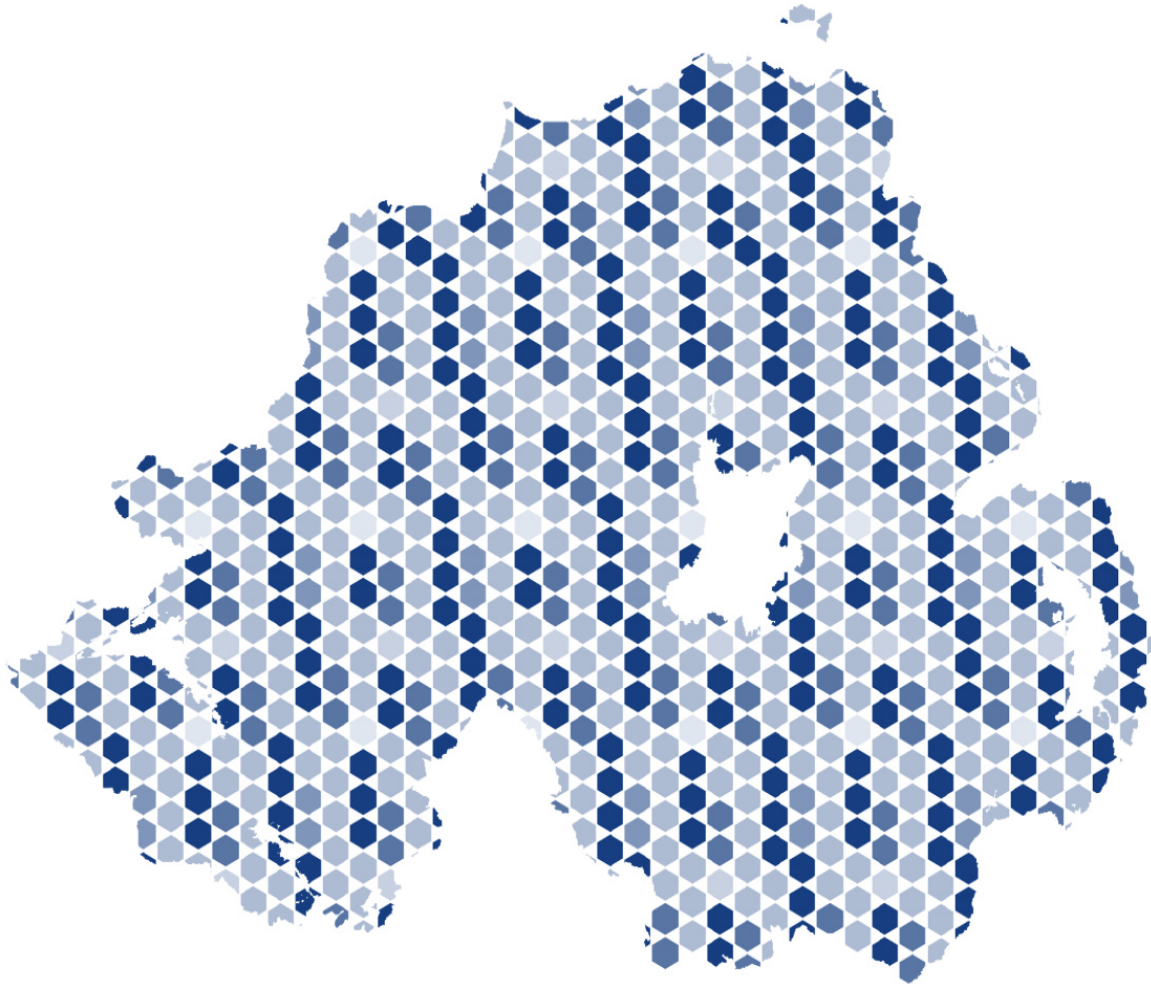


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Tandragee Junior High School,  
Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2010

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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

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

Tandragee Junior High School is a controlled, co-educational school situated in County Armagh. It caters for pupils of all abilities at key stage (KS) 3 within the two-tier system of post-primary education of the Southern Education and Library Board.

A Learning Support Centre (LSC) located within the school provides for the education of 19 pupils, with statements of special educational need, aged 11-16.

The school draws its pupils from a number of primary schools in the town of Tandragee and surrounding rural areas; the enrolment has remained steady over the last three years and currently stands at 272. Approximately 17% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The school has identified 40 pupils within mainstream classes as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and 12 of those have a statement of educational need. There are four newcomer pupils.

### 1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- achievements and standards;
- learning and teaching;
- provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in science and mathematics, including the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- the views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and the Board of Governors (governors);
- the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection;
- the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity;
- the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life;
- the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance; and
- leadership and management at all levels across the school.

## 2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good.

### 2.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the very good standards achieved by the pupils in all curricular areas;

- the exemplary behaviour of the pupils during the inspection and their endeavour to meet the realistically high expectations set by their teachers;
- the quality of the teaching observed which ranged from good to outstanding with one-half being very good and a further one-fifth being outstanding;
- the very good care, guidance and support provided for all of the pupils;
- the very good provision for the pupils in the LSC;
- the hardworking and dedicated teachers who support and extend the pupils' learning through the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular enrichment experiences; and
- the very effective leadership of the Principal who has led and sustained important curricular and pastoral improvements with good support from the senior leadership and middle management teams.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

### **3. THE VIEWS OF THE PUPILS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL**

3.1 The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teachers and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. In addition, meetings were held with representatives from the governors, the support staff and groups of pupils from years 8 and 10.

3.2 One hundred and seventeen questionnaires were issued to parents; 54% were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 39 contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses from the questionnaires and the comments from the parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the work and life of the school. In particular, they highlighted the ethos of care, courtesy and consideration among the school community, the approachability of the Principal, the hard work and dedication of the teaching staff and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils.

3.3 All of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with 15 providing additional written comments. Thirteen support staff also completed questionnaires and three provided an additional written comment. Almost all of the teachers indicated that they enjoy working in the school and value the pastoral and professional support provided by the Principal. A minority of the support staff who responded raised concerns relating to working relationships and communication within the school.

3.4 The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school, highlighting the commitment of all the staff to supporting the pupils in their learning, the wide range of activities provided for the pupils and the very effective leadership of the Principal. They reported that they value highly the links with the local community and the local primary schools.

3.5 In discussions held with the pupils, they talked enthusiastically of the very good relationships that they enjoy with their peers and teachers. They feel well-supported and appreciate the shared effort by all of the staff to ensure that they achieve their best. They reported that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

3.6 The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

#### **4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION**

##### **4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

The pupils are well supported in their academic, social and emotional development and have good or better levels of achievement in relation to their individual needs. In the lessons observed, the pupils were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning; most gave confident and articulate responses and demonstrated the skills required to work collaboratively in group or paired activities. The pupils demonstrate good progress overall in their learning.

The pupils achieve good standards in the end of KS3 assessments. Over the past three years, the results were above the Northern Ireland averages at both levels 5 and 6 in the teacher assessments for English and mathematics. The teachers plan well for the development of the pupils' skills and personal capabilities through the use of an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies which motivate the pupils and engage them purposefully in their work.

The pupils with special educational needs within the mainstream school make good progress in their learning. The school provides support for a minority of pupils with special educational needs through individual withdrawal sessions designed to develop their reading ability.

The data indicate that most pupils make good progress from their starting points. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recognised the need to develop further the successful reading partnership programme to support pupils who experience difficulty in this key aspect of their learning. The school has comprehensive systems in place to assess pupils and track their progress in the short-term and longitudinally. The evidence shows good levels of progression and the data are used effectively to plan support programmes for individual pupils.

More information about the results achieved in the KS3 assessments is given in Appendix 3.

##### **4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

The teaching, learning and assessment in the provision observed is very good.

###### **4.2.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The quality of the teaching in the lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding with one-half being very good and a further one-fifth being outstanding. The teachers work very hard, prepare thoroughly for lessons and enjoy mutually respectful working relationships with the pupils. The school community has worked hard to develop a high quality virtual learning environment which the teachers use creatively to inspire and support the pupils' independent learning.

In the best practice:

- the teachers use skilful questioning to elicit extended responses from the pupils and to assess their understanding;
- the pupils receive constructive feedback on their progress and regular marking provides guidance on how they can improve the quality of their work;
- the development of the pupils' thinking and of their oral skills are integral parts of the lessons; and
- the lessons are well-structured, well-paced and build explicitly on the pupils' interests and their previous learning.

The quality of provision for those pupils who require additional support with their learning is very good. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan with general and subject specific targets; these are used purposefully by the teachers to plan learning and teaching activities that motivate the pupils and to ensure that they progress in their learning.

#### 4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The Principal has a clear vision for, and a very strong commitment to, the continual review of the KS3 curriculum. The teachers have recently reviewed all of the schemes of work in order to tailor the curriculum to meet more effectively the needs of all of the pupils; the schemes of work are of a high standard. The school is working hard to develop further the curricular links with their feeder primary schools to enable the teaching staff to build more effectively on the pupils' prior learning.

The school offers a variety of programmes and activities which contribute to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of local and national employment opportunities. There is a consistent, coherent approach to the delivery of employability across the school which takes account of the contributory aspects of the curriculum and is supported appropriately by a coherent and systematic programme of staff development.

The school provides a range of accredited pathways in years 11 and 12 for the pupils with special educational needs who attend the LSC; there is evidence that these pupils achieve well, commensurate with their ability, in entry level examinations and in a range of vocational courses which are offered by the school in collaboration with the Southern Regional College.

#### 4.2.3 LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE

The head of the Learning Support Centre (LSC) provides very good leadership and guidance for all staff. The LSC caters for 19 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and is staffed by two teachers, two classroom assistants and two domestic assistants. The pupils are taught English, Learning for Life and Work, mathematics and religious education within the LSC; all other subjects are taught by teachers in the mainstream school.

The provision for pupils and the quality of the teaching within the LSC is very good, with carefully planned lessons that address the pupil's individual needs. The pupils achieve well, given their wide range of special educational needs, and there is appropriate accreditation with work experience opportunities. There is a sufficiently broad curriculum to meet the

needs of the pupils, but the school needs to provide more opportunities for the pupils to integrate into mainstream classes with their peers. The school provides a carefully planned careers programme that assists the pupils in choosing career pathways appropriate to their needs, interests and abilities.

#### 4.2.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The school has an effective reward system which ensures that the pupils feel valued and which celebrates their achievements throughout the school community. The teachers give much time to provide the pupils with excellent opportunities to engage in a wide range of sporting, social, cultural and international extra-curricular experiences. The pastoral leadership team in the school attend well to monitoring the pupils' experiences and continually make improvements in the provision.

The senior leadership team is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all of the pupils. The school has developed very good systems to identify those pupils at risk of dropping out of school and is developing further their effective strategies to promote the inclusion and retention of the pupils in school. The school has arrangements to monitor the educational progress of those pupils who attend alternative educational provision off-site. There is a need to ensure these pupils are visited by staff on a more regular basis throughout the school year.

There are currently four pupils, with English as an additional language, from three countries within the European Union. The school provides good pastoral support for the newcomer pupils and has put in place measures to remove barriers which restrict their access to the curriculum.

#### 4.2.5 CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

#### 4.2.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity among the pupils. There is a strong emphasis placed on healthy eating in most curricular areas, in particular home economics. The school liaises closely with a wide range of external agencies to support and further extend this work.

#### 4.2.7 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Principal provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for the development of the school. He is dedicated to the life and work of the school and his care for the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils has gained him the respect of the teachers, parents and pupils. He adopts a measured, strategic approach to school improvement, is aware of and is sensitive to the professional and pastoral needs of the teaching staff and supports them encouragingly in the management of change. The school has successfully embedded the Northern Ireland Curriculum across all subject areas through effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, and through the sharing of best practice in teaching and learning.



The Vice-principal is hardworking and well-organised; she supports and complements the work of the Principal. The senior leadership team has been reorganised recently and the new structure has the potential to provide greater strategic leadership to the school. The school is harnessing the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers through their participation in a curricular leadership and a pastoral leadership team; both teams have contributed significantly to improvement in the school.

A very good start has been made to self-evaluation throughout the school. The school is making very good use of a range of qualitative and quantitative data to track the pupils' progress throughout KS3. It liaises with the linked senior schools to monitor the pupils' attainment at KS4 and in advanced level examinations, where applicable.

The school's process for improvement is very good, based on a high quality school development plan that fully complies with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland (NI) 2005 Order.

The governors are actively involved in the life and work of the school. They work closely with, and support, the Principal to plan strategically improvements in the quality of the provision for the pupils.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 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.

## **SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS**

### **Science**

The quality of the provision for Science is very good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good standards achieved by the pupils;
- the quality of the teaching observed, all of which was very good or better;
- the appropriately wide range of learning and teaching strategies used, which engage the pupils actively in their learning;
- the positive ethos established within the department, underpinned by the very good rapport between the teachers and the pupils in all of the lessons observed;
- the good analysis of the available qualitative and quantitative data to track the pupils' progress and to inform learning and teaching; and
- the commitment and very good leadership of the head of department, supported effectively by the hard-working departmental team.

### **Mathematics**

The quality of the provision for mathematics is very good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good progress made by the pupils and the good standards they achieve by the end of KS3;
- the very good opportunities for the pupils to engage collaboratively in their learning;
- the quality of the teaching observed, half of which was good and half very good;
- the very good leadership provided by the head of department and the commitment of the departmental team to reviewing and improving their classroom practice;
- the very good progress in improving transition from year 7 to year 8 in order to ensure greater continuity and progression in the pupils' learning of mathematics; and
- the ongoing review and development of the schemes of work, informed appropriately by self-evaluation.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Tandragee Junior High School v. Date of Inspection: W/C 22/11/10  
 ii. School Reference Number: 521-0143 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection  
 iii. Age Range: Main School 11-14 (Learning Support Centre 11-16)  
 iv. Status: Controlled

### 1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	84	87	84	92	81
Total enrolment	234	249	272	271	272

### 1.3 Attendance

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11 LSC	12 LSC	Average 2008/09	NI Average 2007/08
% Attendance	94.7	94.8	92.3	80.2	41.4	93	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 

20
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 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 

0.824
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- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 

13.6
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Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11 LSC	12 LSC	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	39	57	39	6	2	143
Enrolment: Girls	42	37	50	0	0	129
Enrolment: Total	81	94	89	6	2	272
PTR	12.59	14.611	13.83	6.179	2.746	

- 1.5 **Staying On Rate (2009/10)** (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	0	NI Av Year 13	N/A
Year 14	0	NI Av Year 14	N/A

### 1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2008/09	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	7	
Another School	0%	12.8
Employment	0%	5.7
Full-time Further Education	0%	46.6
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	100%	27.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.5

**Table 1 showing the Key Stage 3 results for English and mathematics over the previous three years ending in June 2009\*, in comparison with the Northern Ireland (NI) averages for all post-primary schools.**

<b>KS3</b>	<b>More than 20 percentage points above</b>	<b>Between 10 and 20 percentage points above</b>	<b>Within 10 percentage points</b>	<b>Between 10 and 20 percentage points below</b>
Level 5 and above		English	Mathematics	
Level 6 and above		English	Mathematics	
Level 7 and above		English	Mathematics	

\* The school's results are based on teachers' assessments.

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