



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Focused Inspection

Ballymacrickett Primary School Glenavy

Inspected: May 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i. | School: Ballymacrickett Primary
Glenavy | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 12.05.08 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 403-0823 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: Focused |

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	38	33	31	41	29
Enrolments					
Primary	261	257	258	277	258
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	26	27	26	26
Special 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): 96.7%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- | | | | | | |
|----|-------|---|----------|--------------|---|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 11.6 | 0.6 | 0 |
| | ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 22.24 | NI PTR: 20.8 | |
| | iii. | Average Class Size: | 25.8 | | |
| | iv. | Class Size (Range): | 19 to 30 | | |
| | v. | Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | |
| | | i. Clerical support: | | 1 | |
| | | ii. Official Making A Good
Start Support: | | 50 | |
| | | iii. Additional hours of other
classroom assistant support: | | 77.5 | |
| | vi. | Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | 1.55% | |
| | vii. | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | 23.64% | |
| | viii. | Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | 0 | |
| | ix. | Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | 5.04% | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ballymacrickett Primary School is situated on the Scroggy Road, on the outskirts of Glenavy. Most of the children come from the village of Glenavy and the surrounding rural area. Approximately 5% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 24% of children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care included the completion of confidential questionnaires by a sample of parents, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and discussions with a group of children from year 6. Approximately 54% of the parents responded to the questionnaire, with 32 taking the opportunity to write additional comments. The parents and governors indicated the high value they place on the leadership of the Principal, their appreciation of the commitment and hard work of all staff in providing a caring and supportive environment for their children which places a strong emphasis on their academic and social development. The few matters of concern raised by individual parents were discussed with the Principal and the governors. The children spoke confidently and positively of their experiences at school, including the extra-curricular activities and the educational visits. They were aware of how they should behave, and they knew where to seek help if they had a concern. Eleven teachers completed confidential staff questionnaires; their responses indicated a high level of support for all aspects of the life and work of the school.

1.3 The inspection focused on the work in mathematics and the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs (SEN) provision. In addition, the inspection evaluated the work in information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching in mathematics. The inspection also evaluated the school's procedures for pastoral care, including child protection.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 The children are courteous and well-behaved and there is a strong sense of mutual respect at all levels. The teachers know the children well and there is a caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. The children's work and achievements are celebrated through the presentation of certificates, assemblies and in a variety of colourful and informative wall displays throughout the school. The support staff make a valuable contribution to developing the learning and teaching in the school.

2.2 The children's learning and personal development are enhanced through their participation in a wide range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities. Opportunities are available to the children to partake in a range of whole-school events. The children benefit from educational visits and from their participation in a cross-community programme.

2.3 The school has developed strong links with the parents who are encouraged to become involved in supporting their children's learning and in the life of the school. Communication between the school and home is supportive; the parents are informed about the work of the school through regularly produced pamphlets. There is an active parents' fundraising committee which provides generous financial support for additional learning

resources, such as the interactive whiteboards (IWBs). In addition, the parents assist generously in raising funds for nominated charities.

2.4 The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has important strengths. Attention is paid to the development and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity programmes, for example a healthy eating policy, encouragement of healthy breaks through the 'Save Our Smiles' initiative, assemblies and reward systems, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The few areas for improvement identified include the need:

- to explore further ways to develop links with external agencies and the wider community to develop the children's understanding of healthy eating; and
- to monitor and evaluate the health education programme.

2.5 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are:

- the recent review of all policies relating to the child protection and pastoral care of the children which reflect appropriately the vision of the school, "Happy together, learning forever";
- the comprehensive range of documentation and procedures to support and promote the pastoral care and child protection of the children; and
- the positive and caring ethos which promotes successfully the children's confidence, self-esteem and exemplary behaviour.

While careful attention has been given to the development of a comprehensive child protection policy, more attention needs to be given to the access and security arrangements of the school building and annexes in order to ensure the safety of the children and staff at all times.

2.6 The children's experiences in learning through play and activity-based learning in the foundation stage (FS) and key stage (KS) 1, make a significant contribution to their personal and social development. The teachers make available a wide choice of appropriate and challenging activities, based around class themes, through which the children are encouraged to observe, explore, and be imaginative and creative. The teachers and support staff interact effectively with the children, providing sensitive intervention, and extending the children's language and mathematical concepts. In light of the imminent relocation to the new school building, it would be opportune for the school's management and staff to review the early years programme and resources for energetic, outdoor physical play.

2.7 The children enjoy their work and almost all of the children are motivated and enthusiastic learners. They work willingly with their teachers and with one another. The children respond well when encouraged to play an integral role in their own learning by listening to the opinions of others and by taking on different roles and responsibilities in

paired work and effective group work. On many occasions, the children were able to reflect on their learning through plenary sessions or through peer or self-assessment.

2.8 The quality of teaching ranged from excellent to satisfactory, and was very good or excellent in the majority of the lessons observed. In nearly all of the lessons evaluated, the teachers used a wide range of suitable resources and strategies to develop the children's learning and there was a good balance between group, paired and whole-class activities. In the most effective practice, the activities were matched closely to the range of ability and needs of the children, the lessons had clear focus and purpose, and the work had appropriate pace and challenge. In addition, the teachers shared the learning intentions clearly with the children and used skilful questioning to develop the children's thinking and understanding. A few lessons, however, lacked appropriate pace or challenge and the work was over directed by the teachers. A key priority, identified appropriately by the school, is to extend the very good or excellent practice to all the classes.

2.9 In mathematics, the work is developing well. The Principal co-ordinated previously the work in mathematics throughout the school, and there is clear evidence of his excellent work in the motivation and the enthusiasm for mathematics displayed by the children, and in the very good standards achieved. The Vice-principal has very recently taken up the role of the mathematics co-ordinator and has conducted an excellent whole-school self-evaluation of the mathematics provision. This has identified appropriately a number of areas for further development, including the enhanced use of ICT by the children during their mathematical activities.

2.10 Overall, the children experience a well-planned mathematics programme which provides good progression in a wide range of mathematical content and skills. The planning for mathematics is of a high quality; the weekly plans, in particular, identify the learning intentions and focus appropriately on differentiated learning. The well-planned integration of mental mathematics into all the lessons provides the children with many opportunities to develop flexible mathematical thinking skills. In nearly all of the classes, the children consolidate their mathematical learning effectively through imaginative, well-designed consolidation tasks, alongside challenging problem-solving and investigative activities. The children's levels of engagement were high when appropriately challenging mathematical tasks were set, requiring the children to, for example, plan, search for information, ask focussed questions and respond creatively to mathematical investigations.

2.11 By the end of KS2, nearly all of the children are making satisfactory to excellent progress across a broad range of mathematical work, in line with their abilities.

2.12 Teachers make effective use of ICT to support learning and teaching in mathematics across all year groups. Resources and strategies are selected to introduce mathematical concepts and promote the skills of managing information and problem-solving, for example, from the use of programmable devices in the early years through to a range of sophisticated data-handling and Logo packages at KS2. The IWBs are used very effectively to enhance whole-class teaching, promote mental mathematics in a fun and challenging way and relate mathematics to everyday life. The children appear competent and confident users of ICT and opportunities are given for them to develop their skills of independent research and working with others. The children achieve results for the strands of Communication and Modelling in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) accreditation scheme which are well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

2.13 Approximately 24% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The quality of the provision is good; each child is provided with appropriate and sensitive help matched to their needs within the classroom setting. Useful education plans are maintained in co-operation with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the class teachers. They monitor collaboratively the children's progress, targeting help where it is most needed through the effective use of performance data to inform the decision-making process. In addition, individual or group withdrawal sessions are provided for the children in need of regular and intensive reading and phonics support. The children learn in a supportive environment and they respond positively to the encouragement given to them by their teacher. Overall, the majority of children make satisfactory to good progress, and a few are making steady improvements.

2.14 The school keeps records of the outcomes of assessments, standardised tests and written teacher observations. The information is used effectively to provide feedback to the children on their progress and to adjust the teaching to take account of individual progress. The parents are informed of the children's progress; formal and informal meetings are held throughout the year and a written annual report is issued at the end of the school year. The teachers mark the children's work conscientiously, often annotating it with encouraging and supportive comments. In the best practice, the comments indicated how the children could improve their work.

2.15 The Principal provides informed and effective leadership and has a clear and shared vision for the future development of the school. The highly committed Principal, who is in his first year in post, promotes a positive ethos and reflects confidence, trust and mutual co-operation among staff, children, governors, parents and the wider community. He fosters a good team-spirit and a collegial approach to the work of the school; he values the children and the contribution of the teaching and support staff.

2.16 The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan (SDP) and associated action plans, which has taken account of the views of a range of stakeholders within the school community, including the children. There is a growing culture of self-evaluation whereby important strategies have been applied to monitor and evaluate aspects of planning, teaching, and the children's achievements in mathematics. The current school improvement work forms a sound basis on which to develop further the leadership and management roles of all staff with responsibilities. In order to meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plans (SDP) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, the school needs to develop further monitoring and evaluating strategies which focus on the quality of the learning experiences and the standards achieved by the children. The school is well placed to develop this aspect of school improvement.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the high quality of the pastoral care provision which fosters successfully the very positive, caring and inclusive ethos;
- the well-behaved, confident and articulate children;

- the high quality of most of the teaching, including the many examples of excellent and very good practice observed during the inspection in the teaching of mathematics and ICT;
- the Principal's effective and supportive leadership and shared vision for the future development of the school;
- the wide range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities provided for the children; and
- the strong support which the school receives from the governors and the parents and the school's high standing in the wider school community.

3.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

4. THE NURSERY UNIT

4.1 The nursery is situated in temporary accommodation in the Parochial Hall on Chapel Road, close to Ballymacrickett Primary School. The pre-school centre entered the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme and received nursery status in 2001. Most of the children who attend the nursery come from the surrounding rural area.

4.2 The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the completion of confidential inspection questionnaires. Sixty per cent of the parents responded to the questionnaire, with eight taking the opportunity to write additional comments. The parents and staff expressed a high level of satisfaction with the nursery provision. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection.

4.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the nursery is very good. The nursery has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection that comply with DE Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4.4 The nursery gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

4.5 The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- The nursery has a very positive ethos with a clear sense of purpose and relationships at all levels are excellent. The staff are very caring and supportive; the children show high levels of confidence, independence and self-esteem. They respond well to the staff's expectations and their behaviour is very good.
- The daily timetable is thoughtfully organised to provide a lengthy period of free play balanced with adult-led group activities. Transitions are smooth and the routines help promote the children's personal development and a sense of responsibility for their environment.
- There are very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection, there were significant strengths in the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development, language development, creativity and exploration of the outdoor environment through the world around us.
- The staff are very skilful in promoting language and a full range of learning opportunities through the play activities, group sessions and the daily routines. They use skilful questioning to extend the children's ideas and match their support appropriately to the children's abilities.
- There is good planning for the educational programme with the clear identification of the learning the staff intend to promote. The staff observe and

evaluate the quality of the children's play and are building up attractive and detailed individual profiles of achievements. They have regular opportunities to share information on the children's progress with their parents throughout the year. The staff liaise effectively with the teachers in the primary school to ensure continuity and progression as the children transfer to year 1.

- The teacher-in-charge of the nursery provides effective leadership. She is a reflective practitioner who has identified appropriately the need to develop the provision for outdoor physical play, pending the move to the purpose-built nursery facility. She is ably supported by the nursery assistant who is very hard-working and adopts a very caring and enthusiastic approach to her work.

4.6 The nursery has a comprehensive development plan with appropriate targets for improvement. The staff have made effective use of the document, 'Together Towards Improvement', and the DVD, 'Improvement Through Self-Evaluation.' There is good evidence that the process of evaluation has improved the children's learning experiences.

4.7 The quality of education provided in the nursery is excellent. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being very well met. The parents can have confidence in the nursery's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

APPENDIX

HEALTH AND SAFETY (PRIMARY SCHOOL)

- There is an urgent need to conduct a risk assessment of the access and security arrangements of the school buildings and school site and to put in place an effective system to ensure the safety of the children and the staff.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON BALLYMACRICKETT PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	1	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	8%
Average attendance for the previous year.	95%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2¾ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	0	1
Nursery Assistants	0	1
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	0

Number of: ****	
Students	2
Trainees	9

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	25
Percentage returned	60%
Number of written comments	8

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