



*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**

**Braid Primary School  
Broughshane**

**Inspected: April 2008**

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## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- |    |     |  |      |   |
|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i.  | <b>School: Braid Primary<br/>Broughshane</b> | iii. | <b>Date of Inspection: W/B 28.04.08</b> |
|    | ii. | <b>School Reference Number: 303-0836</b>     | iv.  | <b>Nature of Inspection: FI/Ma/ICT</b>  |

B.

<b>School Year</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
Year 1 Intake	3	3	4	3	1
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	27	28	28	24	23
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	0	0	0	0	0
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): 97.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
---------------------	--------------	--------------

- |    |       |   |        |              |   |
|----|-------|---|--------|--------------|---|
| D. | i.    | Number of Teachers<br>(including the principal and part-time teachers):<br>(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 2.2    | 0            | 0 |
|    | ii.   | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):  | 10.45  | NI PTR: 20.8 |   |
|    | iii.  | Average Class Size:   | 3.28   |              |   |
|    | iv.   | Class Size (Range):   | 1 to 7 |              |   |
|    | v.    | Ancillary Support:  |        |              |   |
|    |       | Number of Hours <b>Per Week</b> :   |        |              |   |
|    |       | i. Clerical support:  |        | 7            |   |
|    |       | ii. Official Making A Good Start Support:   |        | 10           |   |
|    |       | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support:   |        | 0            |   |
|    | vi.   | Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:  |        | 0%           |   |
|    | vii.  | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:   |        | 4.34%        |   |
|    | viii. | Number of children who are <b>not</b> of statutory school age:  |        | 0            |   |
|    | ix.   | Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:   |        | 0%           |   |

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Braid Primary School is situated five miles from Broughshane on the main Carnlough Road. The children come mainly from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has declined slightly over the last five years to its current level of 23. At the time of the inspection no children were entitled to free school meals; one child receives additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and teachers to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of the children from years 6 and 7. Twelve families were issued with questionnaires; approximately 58% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which two contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were wholly positive, highlighting the approachable, caring and supportive staff. Two teachers completed the on-line questionnaire and provided additional written comments; their responses were highly affirmative of the work of the school. The governors commented favourably on the standards attained by the children and the strong family ethos within the school. The children in years 6 and 7 spoke very positively about their enjoyment of school, reported that they feel safe, and know what to do in the event of a concern. In particular, the children and the governors expressed their strong support for the increased opportunities provided to participate in competitions and sporting activities. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors about the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.3 The inspection focused on the quality of the work in mathematics, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in supporting numeracy, and the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs provision. The inspection also evaluated the school's procedures in relation to pastoral care, including child protection.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**

2.1 A positive, nurturing ethos permeates the life of Braid Primary School; it is a very happy, caring school. The older children play an important pastoral role in providing effective peer support for the younger children. The staff have worked hard to create an attractive, educationally stimulating learning environment; displays of the children's work are of a high standard. The children's many successes are celebrated appropriately.

2.2 The children are well-mannered, friendly and courteous; their behaviour is exemplary. They are receptive and keen to respond to their teachers, and are welcoming of visitors. When working in groups the children co-operate willingly with one another. The children engage enthusiastically in their learning and show good levels of perseverance in completing tasks.

2.3 The children's personal development is enhanced through their participation in a variety of extra-curricular activities. There has been significant development of sporting activities for the children with the introduction of hockey, camogie, Gaelic football and hurling. The children's self-esteem is further developed through opportunities to participate in a wide range of competitions. A video conferencing educational initiative is used effectively to promote cross-community and curricular links with a local primary school.

2.4 The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has important strengths, with attention given to the development and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity programmes to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, filtered water is available in the resource area, and there is a structured programme of playground games for all the children.

2.5 The arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school have many strengths, for example:

- the quality of the working relationships throughout the school;
- the very caring and supportive ethos;
- the children's participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- the contribution made by the teachers and classroom assistant to the children's experiences; and
- the high priority given to the health and well-being of the children.

2.6 There are, however, important areas for improvement which require prompt action to ensure that the policies and procedures are fully in line with the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. In particular, the school needs to:

- develop and implement procedures to ensure appropriate child protection training for all the staff, and for the vetting of all persons in a regulated position;
- review and update its policies relating to key aspects of child protection and pastoral care; and
- develop and implement effective procedures for informing the parents of matters relating to pastoral care and child protection.

2.7 The school has established good links with the parents; there is effective communication and good working relationships exist between home and school. There is a strong sense of community, and support for the work of the school from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The school values greatly the support of the PTA in raising considerable funds to purchase additional resources and equipment in order to further extend the provision and experiences of the children.

2.8 Each teacher has a composite class that includes three or four year groups and, in addition, responsibility for the work of a whole key stage and co-ordination of a learning area. This places considerable demands on them in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluating the work across a number of different year groups. The teachers prepare diligently for lessons. Medium-term planning identifies appropriately a wide range of activities and resources to support learning. There is, however, a need to: plan more effectively for the range of abilities within classes to ensure that the needs of all learners are met, including those in need of additional learning support; and improve the planning for, and quality of, assessment in order to monitor the children's learning more thoroughly.

2.9 The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was always sound, and on occasions very good. The hard-working teachers are assisted by a classroom assistant who makes a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. In the most effective practice the children were actively engaged in their learning, and participated enthusiastically in oral work. During these lessons: learning intentions were shared; success criteria were identified; a variety of teaching and learning strategies were used appropriately; there was a range of practical activities; and ICT was integrated effectively to enhance the children's learning. In the less effective practice the level of challenge was insufficient for some children, and the over-directed nature of the teaching resulted in limited opportunities for the children to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

2.10 In recent years, the teachers have focused their planning and development on the number aspect within mathematics. In this they have been well supported by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board's curriculum officers. They recognise the need to extend this practice to all other aspects of the mathematics programme to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning through the seven years. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the issues to be addressed in mathematics and has taken early steps to bench-mark the children's attainments against other children in similar circumstances. This practice needs to be developed further to provide for evaluations of the quality of planning, the quality of teaching and the quality of the children's learning in mathematics throughout the school.

2.11 The provision for mathematics is generally sound. In the foundation stage and in key stage (KS) 1 the children enjoy a wide range of experiences. An appropriately strong emphasis is placed on active, play-based learning through which the children develop many of their early mathematical concepts. Games, rhymes, action songs, well-chosen resources and effective oral work led by the teacher and the classroom assistant are used well to help the children acquire a sound understanding of number, measures and shape. A feature of the practice is the extent to which many of the activities provided are related to the children's own experiences; for example, in learning to create pictograms the children used the data from a survey within their own class based on the colour of their eyes. As the children progress through KS2 the majority of them continue to make good progress in mathematics. During the inspection they were observed undertaking practical tasks which promoted their understanding of angles and turns. The evidence from their workbooks, however, suggests too heavy a reliance on the completion of text book exercises and worksheets. There is a need to provide more opportunities for explorative and investigative work, and to encourage the children to develop their own methods of recording.

2.12 By the end of KS1, the children show a good understanding of place value, can demonstrate flexibility in their thinking, have a quick recall of simple multiplication bonds and can understand simple metric measurements. By the end of seven years the children attain good standards in their mathematics. They have a broad mathematical understanding including calculating, estimating and measuring, presenting and interpreting data, and a good knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. There is a need to provide for the further development of the children's understanding of specific number concepts and their mental mathematics.

2.13 The children have many opportunities throughout the school to use ICT in support of their mathematics. Programmable devices such as Roamer and Beebot are used well to help the children gain an understanding of angles, and other software programs are used to complement the mathematics teaching. The children are able to create their own graphs on screen and, in the best practice seen, to make interpretations of the data presented. There is much evidence of the use of the digital camera to record work in which the children have been engaged. The children show great confidence in their use of ICT. They participate successfully in the ICT Accreditation Scheme at KS2 organised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. The school recognises the need to develop further the planning for ICT to ensure it supports learning and teaching in mathematics as effectively as possible.

2.14 The school has appropriate structures in place to identify those children in need of additional learning support. An appropriate individual education plan (IEP) is maintained. Specific, measurable and attainable learning targets have been identified, and the IEP is reviewed each term.

2.15 Standardised testing is used to assess the children's level of attainment and to monitor their year-on-year progress. The children's work is marked regularly and often annotated with positive and personalised comments which serve to encourage them. To develop the quality of marking further, indications should be given to the children as to how they can improve their work.

### **3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

3.1 The Principal has been in post since September 2007. He combines teaching, leadership and management roles, as well as taking a personal interest in the development of the children. He has established effective working relationships between staff, raised the profile of the school within the local community, and led significant development work to enhance the extra-curricular provision within the school in order to improve the children's self-confidence and build a sense of team spirit.

3.2 The Principal has begun to identify areas in need of curricular development, and there is now a need to develop a strategic approach towards the process of planning for school improvement. There is a need to review the current development planning arrangements in order to ensure that they meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The school's process for self-evaluation should be developed further to ensure that the work of the school, particularly those elements which relate directly to the quality of teaching and standards of the children's learning, are systematically monitored and evaluated.

3.3 The school's staff development programme includes external in-service training. The staff have benefited from the support made available, particularly in addressing areas of curricular development.

3.4 The quality of the accommodation and the standard of caretaking in the school are excellent.

#### 4. **CONCLUSION**

##### 4.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the caring family ethos that permeates the life of the school;
- the well-mannered, courteous and respectful children;
- the effective use of practical resources to motivate and engage the children actively in their learning;
- the good use that is made of, and the standards achieved by the children in, ICT;
- the hard work and commitment of the teachers and classroom assistant to the education and welfare of the children; and
- the work of the Principal in developing extra-curricular provision to provide a valuable range of additional sporting and cultural opportunities for the children.

##### 4.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- to develop further the quality of assessment, both of and for learning;
- to increase the level of challenge in aspects of the mathematics teaching to help raise further the standards that the children attain; and
- to develop a strategic approach towards evaluation and development in order to promote improvement in learning and teaching.

4.3 In the areas inspected, the school has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, the school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues relating to the sustainability of the school's provision and the school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and staff.



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