



*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

Cloughoge Primary School and Nursery Unit Newry

Inspected: March 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i. | School: Cloughoge Primary
Newry | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 03.03.08 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 503-1130 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: Focused |

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	-	60	53	55	60
Enrolments					
Primary	-	416	411	404	400
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	53	52	53	52	54
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%

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)

16.6

2

0

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 24 NI PTR: 20.8

- iii. Average Class Size: 29

- iv. Class Size (Range): 25 to 31

- #### v. Ancillary Support:

- Number of Hours
- Per Week:**

- i. Clerical support: 57

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|
| ii. | Official Making A Good Start Support: | 30 |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|

- | | | |
|------|--|-----|
| iii. | Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 304 |
|------|--|-----|

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.9%

- | | | |
|------|---|-------|
| vii. | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | 19.8% |
|------|---|-------|

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| viii. | Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | 0 |
|-------|---|---|

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 12%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cloughoge Primary School has a long history of providing education to its local community dating back to 1831. From 1992-1997, due to local circumstances and to ensure the safety of children and staff, the entire school moved to the former site of Our Lady's Grammar School in Newry; however, in 1997, the school was relocated and rebuilt on its current site on the South West side of the City of Newry. Over recent years, the school enrolment has remained fairly steady and is currently 400. The school has a two-teacher Nursery Unit attached to it; its enrolment has remained steady over the past five years and is currently 54. At present 12% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 The inspection focused primarily on the work in mathematics and numeracy 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 and the support for the health and well-being of the pupils.

1.3 The arrangements for the 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 meeting with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from year 6 and the School Council. Ninety-seven questionnaires were issued to parents; 54% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 19 contained additional written comments. Almost all the responses from the parental questionnaires were positive in their support for the school and in particular highlighted the welcoming ethos and the dedicated and supportive staff. The small number of concerns expressed by parents was discussed with the Principal and representatives from the governors.

1.4 Fifteen of the teaching staff completed a confidential questionnaire, their responses were very positive on many aspects of the school, commenting favourably on its ethos, inclusiveness and on the school's current leadership; the few concerns which arose have been shared with the Principal.

1.5 As part of the inspection process, meetings were held with the governors. The governors expressed their confidence in the school and referred particularly to the leadership of the new Principal especially in relation to empowering the staff and promoting a culture of self-evaluation. In addition, they highlighted the high regard in which the school is held by the local community.

1.6 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars and has identified appropriately a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing.

1.7 Among the strengths in pastoral care and child protection are:

- the warm and welcoming climate throughout the school;
- the well-behaved, courteous and friendly children;

- the work of the key pastoral care staff throughout the school;
- the quality of the working relationships throughout the school;
- the developing climate of inclusion and opportunities afforded to the staff, children and parents to become involved in the decision-making process;
- the contribution made by the support staff to the well-being of the children and their learning experiences;
- the children's participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school; and
- the established links with local schools, businesses, outside agencies and the wider community.

1.8 The areas for improvement identified include the need to review the Anti-bullying Policy in consultation with children, staff and parents and to develop a Drugs Policy.

1.9 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the Nursery Unit has important strengths. It has policies and procedures for child protection that address most aspects of DE Circulars and guidance. Some minor additions are needed to ensure they are comprehensive. These include the need to develop an Anti-bullying Policy and provide clear written procedures for toileting and changing the children.

1.10 The parents and nursery staff were also given opportunities to express their views about the Nursery Unit through inspection questionnaires. Fifty-four questionnaires were issued to parents; 74% were returned to DE of which 17 contained written comments. Responses indicated that the parents were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of the nursery provision. The comments made by the parents have been discussed with the teachers and the Principal.

1.11 The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities including Gaelic football, basketball, tennis and music. The large school choir provides children with a further opportunity to develop their musical ability. There is a developing culture of inclusivity and consultation with the establishment of a children's School Council and the appointment of prefects.

1.12 The school is continuing to develop links with parents with regular meetings about the curriculum and pastoral issues. There are regular opportunities for the parents to consult with the teachers both formally and informally and parents play an active role in fundraising for the school and local charities.

1.13 The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example, healthy breaks, food and fitness initiatives and food tasting sessions, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 A significant strength of the school is its caring, friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the effective working relationships at all levels. There is a relaxed but orderly atmosphere around the school and the children display exemplary standards of behaviour. In class, they are well-focused on their work, persevere with the tasks set, work co-operatively with others when required, and often respond enthusiastically; it is evident that the significant majority of the children enjoy their time in school. The teachers have created an attractive learning environment for the children; they celebrate and acknowledge the work and achievements of the children through displays of their work across the curriculum in classrooms, corridors and shared amenity areas. In class, displays are current and are well used as visual aids to promote learning and teaching. The organisation of the cleaning is both efficient and professional and the standard of caretaking is very good; the building and grounds are well-maintained.

2.2 The teachers are professional, hard-working and very conscientious; at the time of the inspection it was clear that morale is high and the majority of the teachers are confident in their work, secure in their knowledge and are becoming self-reflective practitioners. In year groups, they prepare well for the range of ability within their classes, often sharing their resources and expertise; this leads to much consistency in their practice. In addition, the well-guided support staff make a significant and much valued contribution to the school and to the welfare and learning of the children.

2.3 In the majority of lessons, the quality of teaching was consistently good or better; and in a minority of lessons, it was outstanding. The best practice effectively involved and engaged the children, was appropriately matched to their needs, attractively resourced and well-structured, often with a strong focus on sharing and consolidating the learning intentions with the children. These lessons were also well-paced and timed and a clear partnership in learning existed between the teachers and the children. Open-ended and often skilful questioning by the teachers extended the children's thinking, encouraged them to ask questions and improved their answers. To enhance further the teaching across the school, more attention should be given to differentiating the work to ensure even greater challenge for all children, including the more able. The whole-staff, teaching and non-teaching, would benefit from discussing and sharing their effective practice in learning and teaching.

2.4 The quality of some of the play-based learning in the foundation stage (FS) and key stage (KS) 1 is outstanding; it is characterised by imaginative resourcing to promote a high level of creativity in the work of the children. In the interest of greater consistency, there is, however, a need to develop further the programme for play-based learning across the foundation stage and KS1 in order to promote continuity and progression and to build on the children's previous learning experiences. The very good practice which exists currently has applicability for enhancing learning and teaching beyond KS1.

2.5 The teaching of mathematics is systematic and of a good quality. By the end of KS2, the majority of the children have a secure knowledge of mathematical concepts and achieve good standards, commensurate with their ability.

2.6 The teachers' six-weekly and weekly written plans identify clearly the intended learning and provide links to appropriate classroom activities and resources. In the best practice, the teachers' planning often provides detail of the effectiveness of the teaching strategies and how they are to be adapted to meet the varying learning needs of individuals and groups of children. The development of mathematical language is an important feature of the work in all classes. The review of the current mathematics programme is timely; the reconsideration of the lines of development in mathematics will provide the staff with a helpful clarification of the progression and balance expected within and across the key stages. The inspection findings endorse this review. The work on developing practical mathematics and the promotion of problem-solving activities is progressing well; it will be important that the staff continue to extend the children's mathematical experiences through the development of investigative activities.

2.7 Throughout the FS and KS1, the significant emphasis on practical and oral work provides valuable opportunities for the children to gain a sound understanding of number and basic number operations, simple measures and common shape. The mathematics is often linked effectively to class topics, and numeracy across the curriculum is promoted through play-based learning and through environmental and cultural themes. The children made good use of a programmable device to explore important aspects of number and spatial concepts. The lessons are well-organised; the teachers use effective questioning techniques to check the children's understanding, promote the use of mental strategies and to ensure that they are involved fully in their learning. The children are interested in the work and respond with enthusiasm and co-operation.

2.8 In KS2, whole-class teaching is carefully planned to ensure that all the children understand the key elements of the work being taught. The children focus very well on their teachers' exposition of new concepts. They have opportunities to work in groups and pairs during practical, mathematical problem-solving activities. In the best practice observed during the inspection, the children were given sufficient time to reflect on and explain fully their reasoning and demonstrate mathematical flexibility when questioned on their thinking by the teacher. The children apply their learning to everyday situations and to other areas of the curriculum. In KS2, the children make appropriate use of graphic representation programs to present their findings from the research projects relating to the world around us, and they use effectively C2k programs to develop their understanding of estimation, measure and problem-solving activities.

2.9 The School Development Plan (SDP) identifies practical mathematics and the associated integration of ICT as important areas for improvement. It is appropriate that the Principal and the school's management have identified that the role of the mathematics co-ordinator and the mathematics curriculum team need to be developed further to ensure that through the process of systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation they have a sound knowledge of the quality and breadth of the children's mathematical experiences and attainments in the three key stages.

2.10 The children enjoy a wide range of experiences using ICT throughout the school. Teachers make effective use of ICT to enhance whole class teaching, by engaging children's interest and curiosity and by helping to relate mathematics to everyday life. Planning for the communication and data handling strands shows clear progression from year 1 to year 7. Information and communication technology programs have also been adapted and used effectively to support children with special education needs. A recent innovation within the

school has involved the coaching of year 7 children as 'ICT mentors' to help year 1 children develop basic ICT competence and confidence. The school has identified appropriately the need for ICT to be developed more fully in the SDP and for more effective practices to be implemented regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the provision and the standards achieved by the children.

2.11 The provision for SEN is a significant strength of the school. The school has identified 20% of its children as having special educational needs; 13 of whom have statements of SEN. The current provision for the children is through withdrawal sessions and specific peripatetic support.

2.12 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and another SEN teacher provide high quality support for children who have additional learning needs in numeracy and literacy. The teaching strategies and learning tasks are appropriately varied and interesting and well-matched to the children's learning needs and interests. The children respond well to the teachers, are gaining in confidence, self-esteem and are making steady progress. There is good evidence of the children's increasing involvement in the setting of and reflection on their personal learning targets.

2.13 The staff show a strong commitment to meeting the needs of the children in a sensitive and supportive manner. The children's identified learning needs are integrated appropriately into the class-teachers' specific planning and activities for these children.

2.14 The SENCO is highly effective in her role. She leads the development of the special needs provision within the school, and oversees the drafting of a well-focused annual action plan. The SENCO analyses systematically the assessment data to identify and monitor the children's progress, reviews regularly the individual education plans, provides training opportunities for staff and parents and monitors the provision. The school has invested considerable resources into addressing the children's special educational needs. The roles and responsibilities of teachers, classroom assistants, children and the parents are clearly defined and implemented effectively in relation to the cycle of continuous improvement and the setting of high expectations for the SEN provision. Good progress has been made in addressing the requirements of the special educational needs disability order within the school.

2.15 A systematic process of assessment, recording and reporting arrangements have been devised and are implemented across years 1 to 7. Assessment is carried out by means of a wide variety of standardised and internal tests; these are used effectively to attain an overview of the children's performance, to guide the planning for SEN and to monitor overall progression and, more recently and appropriately, to set realistic targets for improvement in the overall standards. The teachers keep cumulative records of the children's attainment in a variety of standardised tests and other assessment materials, along with samples of their work.

2.16 A completed report on each child's progress is sent annually to the parents. There are regular opportunities for the parents to consult with the teachers both formally and informally. The children's books are marked regularly by all of the teachers. In the best practice, the marking consists of supportive comments which acknowledge the quality of the work and help the children to improve: a practice which needs to be applied consistently throughout all year-groups.

2.17 The Principal has only been in post for nine months but brings to the job a great deal of experience having been a head teacher in her two previous schools. In this short time, she has gained a very good knowledge of the school and has established effective and pleasant working relationships with the whole staff. She is caring and approachable and committed to the welfare of the children and the staff. The Principal is creating a collegial approach to decision-making and has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. She is ably supported by her hard-working Vice-principal who had been the acting-Principal for over a year, prior to the new appointment. A clear partnership in leadership and management is now developing well with a strategic and inclusive focus for the future of the school.

2.18 The school's development planning is under review and has some important strengths. It is increasingly being based on the views of the whole staff through recent whole school audits of development needs undertaken by the teachers and is being closely aligned to a range of action plans. In the last few months, the plan has been revised to meet the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005; the school is aware that some areas still need to be addressed. Currently, the school has a budget under-spend; the governors and senior management team need to consider how best to address this matter in the best interest of the children.

2.19 The school is reviewing the roles and responsibilities of its senior and middle management team; the findings of the inspection confirm that this work is both timely and necessary in empowering the staff and in making full use of the expertise which is available. The focus on creating curricular working teams is also an appropriate way forward. The inspection has identified that there is much ability and internal capacity for curricular development, creativity and innovation. In future, curriculum leaders and senior management need to work even more collaboratively to monitor and evaluate the children's attainments and experiences more systematically for the purpose of ensuring greater consistency in practice, progression and in whole school improvement.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the high quality of the pastoral care;
- the well-behaved and courteous children;
- the quality of the teaching which was consistently good or better in the majority of lessons, and outstanding in a minority;
- the high quality of the provision for the children with special educational needs;
- the contribution made by the support staff to the well-being of the children and their learning experiences; and
- the effective leadership of the recently appointed Principal and the good start made to the development of a collegiate approach to school improvement through self-evaluation; the strong support being offered by the Vice-principal, staff and governors.

3.2 The area for improvement includes the need:

- to develop a whole-staff, collaborative approach to monitoring and evaluating the children's attainments and learning experiences more systematically for the purpose of ensuring greater consistency in practice, progression and whole-school improvement.

3.3 In the areas inspected, the school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the school has the capacity to address.

The school's progress on the areas for improvement will be monitored by the District Inspector.

4. **THE NURSERY UNIT**

4.1 The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:

- the friendly, caring ethos promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and good behaviour;
- the working relationships at all levels are very good;
- the playrooms are thoughtfully laid out into distinct areas for play and good use is made of the children's own art work and topical displays to enhance the learning environment;
- the staff interact with the children in a caring and supportive manner; they are attentive to the individual needs of the children and help to develop sustained interest in the play activities;
- there are satisfactory and, at times, good opportunities for learning in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum; the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and the development of the children's creative ideas are particular strengths; and
- the staff work well as a team and demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children and the development of the nursery's provision.

4.2 The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention:

- the staff need to develop further the planning to ensure that the learning to be promoted for all areas of the programme is identified more clearly; and
- to develop further the assessment methods to ensure a more comprehensive record of the children's progress in all aspects of their development is built up over the year.

4.3 The nursery has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the nursery has the capacity to address.

The nursery's progress on the areas for improvement will be monitored by the District Inspector.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CLOUGHOGH PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	27	27
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	1	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	0
With English as an additional language	2	2

* 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.	92%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4 hours 25 mins	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	2	2

Number of: ****	
Students	1
Trainees	3

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	54
Percentage returned	74%
Number of written comments	17

ACCOMMODATION (NURSERY UNIT)

- The school needs an outdoor play area for the foundation stage and an improved outdoor play area for the Nursery Unit.

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