



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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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

Drumgor Primary School and Nursery Unit Craigavon

Inspected: March 2009

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Drumgor Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 23.03.09**
Craigavon
 ii. **School Reference Number: 501-6080** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	23	31	26	24	20
Enrolments					
Primary	202	203	197	193	181
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	52	52	53	52	52
Special Unit	3	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): 92.4%

**Primary &
Reception Nursery
Unit Special
Unit**

- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 10 2 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.1 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 22.6
- iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
 i. Clerical support: 30
 ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: 35
 iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 155
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 4.97%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 22.1%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 33.7%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Drumgor Primary School is situated in Drumgor Road, Craigavon. The enrolment in the school is declining and currently stands at 181; in addition 52 children are enrolled in the nursery unit. Almost all of the children in the primary school come from the immediate area; the children in the nursery unit come from the immediate and wider surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, approximately 34% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 22% of the children were on the special educational needs (SEN) register. There are 29 children who have English as an additional language. A report on the provision in the nursery unit is included as an Appendix of the report.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the quality of the children's experiences in literacy and numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching. The school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were also evaluated.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS AND CHILDREN (INCLUDING NURSERY UNIT)

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of children from years 6 and 7.

One hundred and twenty-three questionnaires were issued to parents, in the primary school; approximately 47% of these were returned to the Department of Education. Nineteen returns contained additional written comments. The vast majority of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the friendly, welcoming environment and the extensive range of after school activities. The small number of concerns that were raised in the questionnaires have been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

Eight teachers completed the online questionnaire. Their responses were supportive of the work of the school.

The governors spoke very positively about the caring, inclusive ethos of the school and about the importance which the staff place on building the children's confidence and self-esteem. In addition, they expressed their appreciation of the hard working Principal, teaching and non teaching staff.

In discussions held with the year 6 children, they talked enthusiastically about the help they receive from their teachers and their enjoyment of the extra-curricular activities. They also indicated that they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school and the nursery unit are very good. This is exemplified through the celebration of the children's achievements, and, in the primary school, in the opportunities provided for the children to influence decisions about school life through their school council.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. There is a need for the governors to be fully aware of the role of a designated governor and for a risk assessment to be carried out with regards to the policy for public access to the school grounds.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and nursery unit gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the healthy breaks and vegetable garden, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children represent the school very well; they are mannerly, generally well behaved and keen to learn. They value each other's opinions, often persevere to complete tasks and take pride in the presentation of their written work.

The learning environment is bright, stimulating and very well maintained. Displays in the classrooms and corridors celebrate the children's achievements, support their learning and provide them with information and guidance.

The analysis of the school's performance data indicates that, by the end of key stage (KS) 2 a majority of the children attain a standard in literacy and numeracy which is consistent with that of children of a similar age in similar schools.

A majority of the children make satisfactory to good progress in their learning. There is a significant number of children, however, who would benefit from more systematic teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and more challenging learning tasks in order to raise further their levels of attainment. There is also a small number of children whose additional learning needs in mathematics have not been identified.

2.2 LITERACY

The provision for literacy in the school is satisfactory. By year 7, a majority of the children attain satisfactory standards in reading and writing; however, a significant number of the children are insufficiently challenged and guided to attain the standards of which they are capable.

The literacy co-ordinator has been in post for three years. Literacy has appropriately been identified as a priority for improvement in the school development plan (SDP). The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) have provided support to assist the school in introducing a Framework for Literacy development. It will be important to sustain the CASS advice and guidance to support more appropriate literacy planning and policy development at whole-school level. The literacy action plan needs to be reviewed in order to strategically address the need for a shared understanding of the necessary improvements in literacy and to ensure effective teamwork for its implementation.

Most of the children demonstrate good spoken communication skills and confidently converse with adults and their peers. In the foundation stage (FS) the children develop and enrich their language through the effective use of role play. As they progress through the school they have opportunities to address a wider audience through drama, stage productions and assemblies. In the best practice, the teachers and the classroom assistants develop and extend the children's vocabulary through high quality interaction and effective questioning. In almost half of the classes, however, poor quality interaction and low level questioning result in an inability to sustain the children's interests and to effectively promote learning.

The school encourages and supports the development of reading through the provision of inviting class and school library areas, an annual book fair and an effective reading partnership programme. Reading is taught using a commercial reading scheme which is supplemented with age and interest appropriate class texts. In the best practice, the children develop their reading skills through shared reading of class novels. Generally, the staff are successful in motivating the children to read for enjoyment and for research purposes. The level of engagement in reading by a majority of children, especially boys, is very good. During the inspection, groups of year four and year seven children read fluently with good expression and understanding. There is a need to monitor more rigorously the acquisition and application of reading skills within and across the classes in order to plan appropriate programmes to raise the standards of reading.

The school has appropriately identified the need to develop the range, purposes and contexts for the children's writing in order to raise standards. In the early years the children are provided with opportunities for emergent writing through play activities and more formal teacher-directed approaches. There is a need to assess the children's varying stages of development and to plan the writing activities to match their needs and interests. As the children progress through the school, there is inconsistency in their writing experiences. In the best practice, they are encouraged to write for a range of audiences; however, there is overuse of worksheets and colouring activities which hamper the children's creativity and the development of their personal writing styles.

2.3 NUMERACY

The quality and effectiveness of the provision in numeracy is satisfactory. By year 7 the majority of the children have a sound understanding of number, measures, shape and data handling. There is a small number of children, however, who are experiencing difficulties with all aspects of mathematics and for whom it is essential to make adequate provision in order to raise their levels of attainment. There is also a small number of children who are underachieving and would benefit from more challenging tasks and learning activities.

The numeracy co-ordinator has been in post for three years. He has recently updated the numeracy policy which provides general information to guide the teaching of mathematics in the school. There is a need for it to be reviewed, in consultation with the whole staff, and for it to reflect more fully the requirements of the curriculum.

The numeracy action plan appropriately identifies the need to monitor the children's progress in numeracy. It will be important to ensure that monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of learning and teaching in numeracy are managed strategically and that agreed approaches are implemented consistently in order to lead to the necessary improvement.

In the FS the children build upon their early mathematical language and experiences through songs, rhymes and structured activities. In the best practice, the children's knowledge and understanding are effectively consolidated and extended through well planned play, topic based work and creative mathematics lessons. In these lessons the children are engaged, enthusiastic and display high levels of enjoyment; they are effectively supported by the classroom assistants. This good practice needs to be shared within and beyond the FS.

As they progress through KS1 and 2, a majority of the children continue to develop their understanding of all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. In the most effective practice, they are encouraged to develop flexibility in thinking through regular and effective mental mathematics sessions and to use mathematical language in articulating their thinking processes; they have the opportunity to consolidate their understanding through the use of practical materials and to apply it within meaningful contexts. In the less effective practice, much of the children's work is text book and work sheet led with limited opportunity for them to apply their knowledge in practical, investigative or problem solving activities.

The school's programme for progression in mental mathematics needs to be reviewed and extended to cover all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and to include the key teaching strategies to be used.

Information and communication technology is being increasingly planned for and used to support learning and teaching across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has devised an appropriate action plan to guide the development of ICT during this current year; the children have regular opportunities to use ICT within their classrooms and in the computer suite. The year 7 children participate annually in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Accreditation Scheme. By the end of KS2 a majority of the children are confident and proficient in the use of ICT to support communication, modelling and data handling.

An attractive website has been developed to promote the life and work of the school.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNERS

3.1 PLANNING

The staff are in the process of reviewing and revising their long, medium and short-term planning in literacy. The long term planning in mathematics outlines the termly content to be covered in each year group with emphasis being placed on the development of numeracy skills. This planning needs to be reviewed in order to provide a more balanced coverage of the mathematics curriculum and to ensure consistent and progressive development in all areas of mathematics.

The quality of the medium-term planning in literacy and numeracy varies; in most cases it identifies the broad learning outcomes, teaching approaches, resources and assessment strategies to be used. In a small number of classes the teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of the wide range of ability within the class; they regularly evaluate the extent and quality of the children's learning and use these evaluations to inform future planning. This good practice needs to be more consistent throughout the school.

In the early years, the teachers need to plan more collaboratively and to take more account of the children's experiences in the nursery unit in order to ensure progression in the children's learning.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, the quality of teaching in approximately half of the lessons observed was good or better and in just over one tenth it was outstanding. However, in one quarter of the lessons observed, weaknesses outweighed strengths. In the best practice observed the key emphasis was on the children's learning; the teachers set realistically high expectations for the children's achievement and they used a wide range of teaching strategies to engage the children and to involve them in their learning. In these lessons there was effective questioning to promote and extend the children's thinking, the lessons were well paced and the activities were appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all of the children. In the less effective practice the lessons were overly directed by the teacher, the expectations for learning were too low and the tasks set did not match the capabilities, interests and needs of the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents informed about their child's progress. These include written reports and formal parent-teacher consultations. In the best practice, the annual written reports indicate how parents can support their child's learning.

The school has identified the need to develop an assessment policy to include guidelines for marking. Nearly all of the teachers mark the children's written work regularly. In the best practice there is effective marking to promote improvement and the children are encouraged to self-evaluate against their individual targets. This good practice needs to be implemented more consistently across the school.

The school uses a suitable range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's level of achievement in English and mathematics. The school has identified the need for more effective analysis of this performance data to effectively track the progress of individual children, to identify whole school areas for development, and to raise further the standards of attainment in English and mathematics.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the SEN provision is satisfactory. There is a range of complex and challenging special needs evident across the school. Twenty-two per cent of the children are on the SEN register and 5% of the children have a statement of special educational needs. The special needs provision is guided by a useful policy document which clearly sets out roles and responsibilities. Intervention is often sought at an early stage as a result of thorough assessment in the nursery setting or as the children progress through the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has availed of appropriate professional development opportunities and is effective in her work. She provides withdrawal support for numeracy for a small number of children in year 3 and literacy support for children from year 3 to year 7. The children are well settled in their groups, feel secure in the setting, enjoy their lessons and have a good relationship with the teacher. There are useful individual education plans (IEPs) which guide the work and the children make progress in their learning. The SENCO has appropriately identified the need for the children to further develop ownership and understanding of their IEP targets. The children with special educational needs are generally well supported in the classrooms; the SENCO provides the staff with relevant information and advice about how best to meet the children's needs. The school management team has appropriately identified the need to share the good practice in special needs provision, to ensure ongoing training for the non-teaching staff and to monitor and evaluate the current model of provision. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) endorses these as key priorities in order to maximise expertise and to build capacity across the school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal has been in post for five years. During that time he has worked effectively to promote positive working relationships with the parents and local community; he knows the children well and is committed to making the best possible provision for them. There is now a need for him to focus on the development of key areas of the curriculum in order to ensure consistency and progression and to raise the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. The development and contribution of the co-ordinators will be an essential factor in achieving this. The Principal and the governors need to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators are clearly communicated and that action for improvement is taken forward. The co-ordinators need to be more pro-active in developing their own knowledge and expertise and in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within their area of responsibility.

The Principal is ably supported in the day-to-day organisation of the school by the Vice-principal.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's development and planning process is inadequate. Whilst the SDP identifies a range of appropriate priorities for development within a three year period, there are important areas for improvement identified which need to be addressed promptly in order to meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. These include the need for all the staff to be involved in a collegiate approach to the school development and planning process, for effective consultation with parents and governors in the preparation of the plan and to specify the arrangements for the governors, in consultation with the Principal, to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and progress made against the SDP priorities.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care arrangements;
- the very good quality of education in the nursery unit;
- the very good behaviour, interest and motivation of most of the children;
- the good or better quality of teaching in the majority of the lessons observed;
- the children's confidence in talking and the level of engagement in reading by a majority of children; and
- the commitment of the Principal, Vice-principal and senior nursery unit teacher to making the best possible provision for all the children in the school.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the leadership skills at all management levels in order to ensure consistently good standards of teaching and learning in the school;
- establish a collegiate approach to the school development and planning process and to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the school in order to raise the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy; and
- develop further strategies for differentiation in order to meet more effectively the needs of all of the children.

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

DRUMGOR PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

The main strengths within the educational and pastoral provision of the nursery unit are as follows:

- The working relationships at all levels are characterised by mutual respect which promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and very good behaviour.
- The daily timetable is carefully organised to provide a very good balance of free play and adult-led activities. The routines are unobtrusive and used effectively to provide choice and promote the children's independence.
- There are very good opportunities for learning in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The staff are skilful in promoting the children's thinking skills, their language and an understanding of early mathematical and scientific concepts. The children are making good progress.
- The staff have established effective planning and assessment practices. They evaluate effectively the children's progress and the information is used appropriately to inform future planning.
- The children with additional learning needs are integrated well into the play sessions. The staff are aware of their particular needs and use effective strategies when working with these children.
- The nursery unit is led and managed effectively. The teacher-in-charge provides a very good role-model in her work with the children. The staff work well as a team; they have identified appropriately the need to develop further the provision for outdoor physical play. It is essential that the school's leadership team address this matter through the SDP.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery unit is very good. The nursery unit is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is a need to improve urgently the security level of the fence in the nursery unit's outdoor play area.

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