



*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

**Ebrington Primary School and Nursery Unit
Londonderry**

Inspected: April 2009

CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	4
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	6
6.	THE NURSERY UNIT	8

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i. | School: Ebrington Primary Londonderry | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 20.04.09 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 201-0382 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: Focused |

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	41	40	48	46	34
Enrolments					
Primary	386	374	370	369	326
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	52	52	52	52	53
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):

95%

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

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------|---|----------|--------------|---|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 15.2 | 2 | 0 |
| | ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21.4 | NI PTR: 20.8 | |
| | iii. | Average Class Size: | 23 | | |
| | iv. | Class Size (Range): | 17 to 30 | | |
| | v. | Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | |
| | | i. Clerical support: | | 53.3 | |
| | | ii. Official Making A Good
Start Support: | | 50 | |
| | | iii. Additional hours of other
classroom assistant support: | | 35 | |
| | vi. | Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | 2.5% | |
| | vii. | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | 27% | |
| | viii. | Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | 0 | |
| | ix. | Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | 30% | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ebrington Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in Ulsterville Avenue, at the lower end of the Waterside area of Londonderry. The enrolment has been declining gradually over the past five years and currently stands at 326; in addition, 53 children attend the nursery unit. Most of the children come from the immediate locality and a small number come from the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, approximately 30% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 27% of the children were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The double nursery unit offers full time provision for the children attending.

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

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 of the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from year 6.

One hundred and ten questionnaires were issued to parents; approximately 78% of these were returned to the Department of Education (DE). Forty-two returns contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: the caring and happy environment; the approachable and hard-working Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff; the very good working relationships between the parents and the teachers; and the range of extra-curricular activities provided for the children. The small number of concerns that were raised by the parents have been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

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

The governors spoke very positively about the ethos within the school, the dedicated Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff, and the close links between the school and the local community.

In discussions held with the year 6 children, they reported that they felt safe in school and knew who to turn to if they had any concerns about their well-being. They spoke very positively about their experiences in school and about the support and care provided by the teachers and the support staff.

In the nursery unit 52% of the parents responded to the questionnaires and 12 made additional comments. The responses indicate that the parents regard the nursery highly and appreciate the approachable and enthusiastic staff; the development in the children's oral language and in their confidence; and the varied and interesting programme.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of pastoral care in the school and nursery unit is outstanding. This is reflected in the high standard of behaviour displayed by children at all key stages and in all areas of the school. The pastoral care co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. The positive behaviour policy is very effective in promoting mutual respect and the self-esteem of the children. The working relationships between the children and the staff are excellent. The school employs a wide range of strategies to inform and involve the parents; these include parents' information evenings, regular newsletters, home-learning sheets as well as the 'Parents in Literacy' and 'Parents in Numeracy' schemes which enable them to support their children's learning.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and nursery unit has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

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 through the provision of daily opportunities for physical activity and the efforts made to encourage the parents to provide healthy snacks and lunches, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children settle quickly to their work and demonstrate high levels of motivation. They are engaged actively in the learning process and have good opportunities to interact effectively with one another and to apply their learning in a variety of contexts.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for English and literacy is good.

Talking and listening activities are evident in all areas of the curriculum. The children are ready and willing to talk with their teachers, peers and visitors; they are also keen to answer and ask questions in class. The teachers place a strong emphasis on the children listening respectfully and attentively to others. In the best practice, skilful questioning by the teacher encourages the children to speak at length and to justify and explain their comments and opinions. The quality and the range of work in talking and listening is good.

By the end of year 7 the majority of the children achieve satisfactory standards in reading. The progress made by a significant minority of the children is, however, inconsistent as they move up the school. The school has identified the need for greater consistency in the provision across year groups. As a result of the school's own evaluation, a more effective approach to the teaching of reading has been introduced. Clear targets for improvement have been set for individuals and small groups of children. There is a need to establish clear monitoring and evaluating strategies to ensure that these initiatives are affecting positively the standards achieved by the children. Reading is taught systematically throughout the school with an important emphasis placed on the teaching of phonics. In the foundation stage (FS) the children are encouraged to listen to stories and rhymes, and engage in shared, guided and modelled reading activities generally based on their interests. The children become familiar with letters and sounds and there is evidence to show that as a result of the focus on phonics and vocabulary they are beginning to recognise key words and letters, to retell stories and to begin to read repeated phrases in texts and digital books. As they progress through key stage (KS) 1 they are able to develop their strategies to read unfamiliar words. In KS2, the teachers use a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts to help the children develop their reading skills. Interesting and age-related novels are introduced and much of the written work arises from these books. In the lessons observed the children demonstrated a good understanding and enjoyment of what they read.

The children in the FS contribute to guided writing activities, paced at a level that ensures their success in writing; they are encouraged to write independently and to sequence their own stories. By the end of KS1 many of the children can write in paragraphs about personal experiences and matters which relate to other aspects of the curriculum. In KS2 much of the work is influenced by other areas of the curriculum and, particularly in the year 7 classes, the work is mature, showing evidence of a developing style of writing. While much of the work is good there is an inappropriate emphasis placed on text-book exercises, particularly at the middle of KS2. The children need more opportunities to write for an increasing range of purposes and audiences. Overall the standards in writing by the end of year 7 are good.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is good.

The younger children are introduced to mathematics through a variety of appropriate experiences which include stories, rhymes and regular sessions of play. The teachers and classroom assistants, through their interactions with the children, promote an interest in counting, matching, measuring and making comparisons. The children in the early years are increasingly independent in their use of equipment and resources and most co-operate well in group and class activities. While the majority of the children respond well to these activities, there is a minority of children who have difficulties with some of the basic concepts. It is important to ensure that the needs of these children are being addressed through early intervention strategies.

In the most effective lessons observed in KS1, the children's early mathematical concepts were consolidated and extended in a range of purposeful activities. The majority of the children were able to talk with confidence about their experiences and had a good understanding of the concepts. This level of understanding was not always matched by the nature of some of the learning activities; the teachers need to provide additional opportunities for the more able children to apply their mathematical skills in unfamiliar and challenging situations.

By the end of year 7 the majority of the children achieve satisfactory standards in mathematics. The progress made by a significant minority of the children is, however, inconsistent as they move up the school. The school has identified the need for greater consistency in the provision across year groups. In KS2, particularly in the final year, the children have very good opportunities to apply their learning to problem-solving and investigative activities. This good practice should be disseminated throughout the school to allow all of the children the opportunity to achieve the highest possible standards.

The numeracy co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. She is focused on ensuring that high quality learning experiences are provided for the children within and across all year groups. The co-ordinators have identified appropriate areas for improvement and produced a three year development plan which outlines clearly how the improvements are to be made. Expectations of what the children can achieve have been raised and targets are being set for individual children. Appropriate strategies for monitoring and evaluating progress and sharing good practice in the classroom are being implemented. A very positive feature of the provision is the extent to which parents have been involved effectively in their children's learning in mathematics.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The quality of planning varies within and across year groups. The majority of the planning clearly identifies learning intentions, and learning and teaching strategies and activities. In the less effective practice, learning and teaching strategies need to be more clearly identified if planning is to adequately guide and inform classroom practice. The majority of the teachers complete useful evaluations of the quality of the children's learning, using these to inform future planning.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, most of the teaching observed was good or better and a small number of lessons were outstanding. In the best practice lessons were well-paced with high expectations held for what the children could achieve and appropriate challenge provided. The children had opportunities to work collaboratively and teachers made effective use of assessment strategies. Where the practice was less effective, the children had insufficient opportunities to manage and organise their own work and there was an overemphasis on the completion of poor quality worksheets and routine, repetitive learning tasks.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school's assessment processes are used effectively to monitor the children's learning as they progress through the school. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and thoroughly, most teachers supplementing their encouraging comments with helpful insights that indicate to the children how they can improve further. A feature of the assessment is the extent to which the children are provided with opportunities to assess their own learning.

The school makes effective use of data on the children's performance in a range of assessments to set appropriate targets for improvement. The Principal is currently considering more systematic approaches to monitoring the progress of individual children.

The procedures for reporting the children's progress to parents are thorough and effective. Two annual meetings and a written report are provided as well as informal contacts which develop good links between the home and the school.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

The quality of the special educational needs (SEN) provision is good. There is a range of complex and challenging special educational needs evident across the school. 27% of the children are on the special educational needs register and 2.5% of the children have a statement of special educational needs. In addition, there are a number of children who experience considerable barriers to their learning. The school works closely with the parents of all of these children and a range of external support agencies to help improve the life chances of the children.

The SEN provision is guided by a policy document which sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of all of the staff. There is a need to build on the very good methods of recording the individual children's progress and development in the nursery unit and ensure that appropriate progress records are maintained to identify those children in need of additional support in literacy and numeracy in the FS and in numeracy in KS1.

A skilful part-time special educational needs teacher is responsible for providing individual and small group support in literacy and numeracy. The children withdrawn for specialist support are well settled in their groups, feel secure in the setting, enjoy their lessons and have a good working relationship with the teacher. Importantly, the children are made aware of their need to improve, empowered to persevere at tasks and provided with information about their progress. The parents are fully involved and are regularly informed about the children's learning and development. All class teachers, effectively supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), are responsible for the development of children's individual education plans (IEPs). There is variability in the quality and effectiveness of some of the targets set in the IEPs; in the less effective practice there is a need to ensure that there is effective monitoring and recording of the children's progress and attainments. The SENCO has taken appropriate professional development opportunities and provides high quality leadership and management of the provision. She has appropriately identified the need to develop the quality and effectiveness of the SEN provision further and to involve all the staff in order to build their capacity to meet the individual needs of all of the children.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal provides excellent and visionary leadership. He sets high standards for himself and the whole school community and is thoroughly committed and dedicated to promoting the highest possible standards of education for all the children in his care. He is highly reflective in his work and has a sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of the school and the wider community. He is caring and supportive of his staff. He is ably supported by a number of senior staff.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

A collegial approach to school development has been established which involves the staff in the audit of provision and in the setting of priorities. The parents and governors contribute significantly to the process of school improvement. The school has identified, through effective self-evaluation, the need to raise the standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy. Appropriate strategies have been implemented to address these areas for improvement. In addition, the School Development Plan (SDP) identifies the need to review the roles and responsibilities of the staff throughout the school. The inspection findings endorse this as a priority.

The school gives very good attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the excellent and visionary leadership of the Principal;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was good or better in most of the lessons and outstanding in a small number;
- the effective leadership provided by the SENCO and the senior teacher;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children and their positive attitudes to learning;
- the involvement of the parents, governors and local community in the life and work of the school; and
- the good use made of internal and external data to identify the need to improve standards in literacy and numeracy.

5.2 The main area for improvement is:

- the need to continue to improve standards in literacy and numeracy across the school.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

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

- The children demonstrated high levels of motivation, concentration and interest in their learning. They have the confidence to ask the staff for help and support and their behaviour is excellent. The children's work is thoughtfully displayed, which demonstrates the children's progress and development and creates an attractive learning environment.
- The programme offers very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Particular strengths are in the promotion of the children's oral language and listening skills, early science, mathematical language, and the use made of natural materials in the imaginative play areas both indoors and outdoors.
- The high quality of the staff's interaction with the children. The adults engage purposefully with the children, listening to them and building effectively on their ideas.
- Excellent provision is made for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.
- The staff have developed appropriate methods of planning and assessing the children's development and achievement. This information is shared regularly with the parents and valuable links have been established with the primary school and external agencies.
- The teacher-in-charge of the nursery is committed to the continued development of the nursery. She is ably supported by her assistant teacher and nursery assistants.

The staff have developed an appropriate approach to self-evaluation and there is clear evidence that the process has led to improvement in the children's experiences. The School Development Plan is detailed and identifies important and appropriate action plans to address each priority.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The nursery has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

• **STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON EBRINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	27	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	3
With English as an additional language	0	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.	17%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
5 hours 5 minutes		

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	3	0

Number of: ****	
Students	4
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	52%
Number of written comments	12

HEALTH AND SAFETY (PRIMARY SCHOOL)

- The security of the external classrooms is inadequate.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2009

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.