



*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

Fivemiletown Primary School Co Tyrone

Inspected: February 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Fivemiletown Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 04.02.08**
ii. **School Reference Number: 501-6088** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	28	23	16	27	22
Enrolments					
Primary	169	172	165	167	159
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): 96.3%

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) | 7 | 0 | 0 |
|----|----|---|---|---|---|

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|------|--------------|
| ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 22.8 | NI PTR: 20.8 |
|-----|----------------------------|------|--------------|

- iii. Average Class Size: 23

- iv. Class Size (Range): 14 to 26

- | | | | | |
|----|--|------|---|----|
| v. | Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week: | i. | Clerical support: | 30 |
| | | ii. | Official Making A Good
Start Support: | 15 |
| | | iii. | Additional hours of other
classroom assistant support: | 75 |

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| vi. | Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | 3.13% |
|-----|--|-------|

- | | | |
|------|---|--------|
| vii. | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | 28.13% |
|------|---|--------|

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

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 7.5%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Fivemiletown Primary School is situated on the Ballagh Road on the outskirts of Fivemiletown in County Tyrone. The children come mainly from the surrounding area. The enrolment of the school currently stands at 159. Approximately 7.5% of the children are entitled to receive free school meals.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection 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 a group of children from year 6. One hundred and five questionnaires were issued to the parents; 54% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which seventeen contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the parents appreciate the dedication of the staff, the helpful guidance provided by the school and the programme of after-school activities. A minority of the parents who responded were concerned about the school meals arrangements and aspects of communication with the school. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported the main issues emerging from the questionnaires to the Principal and the governors and these are dealt with in the main body of the report. The governors expressed their confidence in the school and they referred particularly to the dedication of the teachers and the Principal and to the valuable links with parents and the local community. The children talked appreciatively about the school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

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

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 The staff have worked very hard to create an attractive, friendly and caring learning environment for the children. The strong community atmosphere that pervades the school is based on very good working relationships at all levels. The children are courteous to visitors and almost all display exemplary behaviour. When given the opportunity to work in groups or in pairs, they co-operate willingly with one another and work enthusiastically with their teachers. A high level of mutual respect is evident between the teachers and the children. The teaching and support staff work closely as a team and the non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school. The classrooms and corridors are used well to display the children's work and to celebrate and record their activities and achievements.

2.2 The school gives excellent 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 the 'Try Something New Table', encouragement of healthy breaks and links with relevant food and health professionals, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.3 The children's experiences are enriched through the Extended Schools programme and through a variety of extra-curricular activities which include the promotion of the arts and through a range of sporting activities. There are strong links with the neighboring nursery school and playgroup, the local maintained primary school and the feeder post-primary school. In addition, the children's learning and social development are enhanced through participation in educational visits, competitions and community events and by the many visitors to the school. The children are encouraged to consider the needs of others and they raise considerable funds for various charities.

2.4 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 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.

2.5 The school has established very good links with the parents; the teachers encourage them to play an active role in the education of their children and in the life of the school through for example, joint parent and child events, parent meetings, regular newsletters and the recently established school website. The school values the support of the Parents' Aid Group in organising fund-raising events to provide additional resources and experiences for the children.

2.6 The teachers have identified whole-school planning as an area for development and, in particular, they plan to continue to focus on differentiation to meet the individual needs of the children. It is appropriate that the school is currently reviewing and developing the short-term planning to take account of developments in the curriculum. Each teacher compiles detailed medium-term planning for mathematics which is used effectively to guide them in their work with the children, and to provide breadth and variety in the curriculum. The teachers use ICT effectively in the planning of their lessons and, in a majority of classes, it is well-integrated into learning and teaching.

2.7 During the inspection, the quality of the teaching observed ranged from very good to excellent. All of the lessons were well-structured, paced and differentiated to meet the needs of the children. The teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches; they often shared the learning objectives from the outset and took time to reinforce and consolidate these throughout the lesson. The children were motivated and responsive, and willingly took responsibility for aspects of their own learning. In nearly all of the lessons observed there was a clear sense of fun and enjoyment. The school is well-equipped to support learning and teaching through the use of ICT. In addition to the computers in each classroom, the school has made good use of the recently acquired computer suite to enable the children to access and use the computers during timetabled sessions for individual classes.

2.8 The school has identified mathematics as a key area for development and participates currently in the Southern Education and Library Board's Raising Achievement in Mathematics programme. This is providing a good structure for promoting improvements in mathematics. The teachers have undertaken in-service training in numeracy; they have responded positively to the in-class and whole-school support and guidance provided by the

Curriculum Advisory and Support Service and have begun to implement consistently, many of the ideas into the classroom practice. A recent development has been the drawing up of a framework identifying the progression in the content being taught in each year group; this work is an important first step in developing a whole-school scheme for mathematics.

2.9 The teachers have importantly focused on the development of the mathematical processes. The introduction of the development of mental mathematics as an integral part of the lessons was a key feature observed during the inspection. Within the year groups, the teachers are effectively encouraging the children in the application of their mathematical knowledge and skills to a range of investigations related to other areas of the curriculum; for example the World Around Us. The school has invested in a wide range of appropriate mathematical resources which are being used very effectively in all the classes.

2.10 In the foundation stage the children enjoy learning early mathematical concepts and language through the play programme and structured numeracy activities. There is a good range of practical experiences provided which are effectively promoting the development of early mathematical ideas about shape and space, money and simple number operations. The effective use of the digital camera encourages the young children to record measurement in real contexts.

2.11 As the children progress in key stage (KS) 1 they are becoming more confident with number; during the inspection they enjoyed number games related to place value. The children have suitable opportunities to use the interactive whiteboard, for example, to count in patterns and to consolidate counting forwards and backwards within 100. The teachers and children are becoming increasingly confident in the use of ICT to support and enhance the teaching and learning experiences.

2.12 Throughout KS2 the children progress and develop further their mathematical knowledge and skills. The infusion of the children's thinking skills into the mathematical investigations encourages them to problem-solve and to use mathematics in meaningful contexts related to aspects of class topic work such as the Egyptians and science experiments using ice. The children use databases, pie charts and graphs generated through the use of ICT to represent and display findings from their mathematical investigations and to reinforce important concepts in relation to multiplication and fractions.

2.13 By year 7 most of the children have a good understanding of place value; they calculate accurately, measure and record in different units, know how to present and interpret data in a variety of ways and are aware of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. The majority of the children in year 7 achieve age-appropriate standards in mathematics. The school is committed to raising further the standards which the children attain in mathematics and it is timely that they are beginning to track the children's progress and development year-on-year. In the best practice, the teachers, in consultation with the children, have set realistic targets for improvement and the teaching is matched well to the needs of the children.

2.14 The school uses a range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess children's level of achievement. The class teachers gather the test data and appropriately plan to use this, with the formative assessment information, to compile profiles of the children's progress and development. The recently-appointed assessment co-ordinator has begun to address the important aspects of collating and effectively managing data on the children's progress in mathematics in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

2.15 The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and add supportive comments. A feature in many of the lessons observed was the time taken by the teachers to carefully reinforce and consolidate learning alongside the children. The teachers give much praise and encouragement to the children for the effort made in their work and their contribution to the lesson.

2.16 There are clear procedures in place for reporting to parents on their children's progress. In the first term the parents are invited to meet with class teachers to discuss their children's progress. Detailed reports are sent to parents in the third term each year; these provide information on attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. In addition, the school operates a less formal system where parents can arrange a meeting with a class teacher at any time throughout the year to discuss their child's progress.

2.17 The school has identified 30% of its enrolment as requiring support with aspects of their learning in literacy and numeracy and 10% of these children have statements of special educational needs. The recently-appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has shown good leadership in reviewing the preparation and evaluation of individual education plans. He has also identified the need for the staff to identify more focused differentiation within the short-term planning and to consolidate standardised test information in order to track the children's progress more effectively.

2.18 The school has procedures in place to identify those children who need help with aspects of their reading, writing, mathematics and behaviour. The children's needs are identified at an early stage through standardised test results, teacher observations and information provided from the local playgroup and nursery. Teachers, in conjunction with the SENCO, devise appropriate educational plans, which include appropriate targets matched closely to the needs of the children. The parents and the children are involved in the setting and reviewing of these targets. The school makes effective use of outside agencies, including educational psychologists and peripatetic support staff, to assist with diagnosis and to support SEN provision within the school.

2.19 Funding has been made available for the purchase of special needs resources. Classroom assistant hours have also been increased so that children with special educational needs can avail of the extended school activities on offer in the afternoons.

2.20 The Principal has been in post for four years and during this time she has implemented many positive initiatives to enhance the quality of the provision and to raise standards in the school. She is a committed and effective leader and has worked diligently to establish a strong team spirit among the dedicated and hard-working staff. She is ably supported by the recently appointed Vice-principal, the staff and the governors. As a result

of budgetary priorities, the Principal does not avail of regular non-teaching days to carry out her administrative duties; this situation needs to be reviewed in order to enable her to monitor and evaluate the full implementation of the School Development Plan (SDP) and to achieve an appropriate balance between her teaching and administrative duties.

2.21 The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed SDP which meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. There are policies and programmes in place, for example, in teaching and learning and in literacy and mathematics which effectively support a culture of school improvement.

2.22 The school's staff development programme includes school-based and external in-service training. The staff have benefited from the support made available, particularly for addressing several of the priorities identified in the SDP.

2.23 The quality of the accommodation is good and the standard of caretaking in the school is excellent.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very positive ethos that permeates the life and work of the school, the attractive and well-organised learning environment and the high quality of the pastoral care of the children;
- the very high quality of all the teaching observed during the inspection;
- the good opportunities for the children to experience a broad and well-integrated mathematical programme which helps to develop appropriate mathematical language, concepts and understanding;
- the very good support and clear differentiation within lessons for the children with special educational needs;
- the interesting and varied range of extra-curricular activities, and links with outside agencies and other local schools; and
- the effective leadership of the Principal who is ably supported by the hard-working Vice-principal and dedicated staff.

3.2 In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- There is a need to ensure that all the entrances to the school are secured at all times.
- The security of the access to a large storage area in the school hall needs to be reviewed to avoid the risk of accident to the children.
- The sharp edges on a metal supporting beam in the school hall are a potential hazard.

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