



*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

Forge Integrated Primary School Belfast

Inspected: March 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Forge Integrated Primary Belfast** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 10.03.08**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 105-6535** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	27	31	26	32	42
Enrolments					
Primary	214	202	198	206	225
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):

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 9 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 25 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 28
- iv. Class Size (Range): 21 to 33
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 32.5 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 45 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 92.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.7%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 25.7%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 14.6%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Forge Controlled Integrated Primary School is situated on a pleasant site on Carolan Road in south Belfast. The enrolment has increased gradually over the last three years and stands currently at 225. The children come from a wide catchment area. Approximately 15% of the children are entitled to receive free school meals. The school has identified almost 26% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teachers 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 three questionnaires were issued to parents; 42% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 19 contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicate strongly that the parents support and value the work of the school. In particular, they highlighted the caring, welcoming and inclusive ethos and the hard work and approachability of the staff. The governors expressed their commitment to, and confidence in, the work of the school; their appreciation of the dedication of the staff and the support of the parents. Just over half of the teachers completed the online questionnaire. All of their responses highlighted strengths in the work of the school. In particular, they commented on the strong sense of teamwork among the staff and they expressed their support for the Principal. In the discussions with the children, they talked about the many aspects of school life that they enjoy and they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and a representative of the governors about the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.3 The inspection focused on the work in numeracy, including the contribution of information and communication technology (ICT) in supporting learning and teaching in numeracy, the effectiveness of the school's provision for special educational needs (SEN) and on the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 The school provides a caring, orderly and supportive learning environment for the children. There is a strong inclusive ethos which promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect. The children are polite, welcoming to visitors and willing to talk about their learning. Good efforts are made to display and celebrate the children's achievements throughout the school, and the standard of caretaking is excellent.

2.2 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 they have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are the recent establishment of the pupil council which provides the children with an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process and the effective methods of communicating with the parents.

2.3 The school gives good attention to promoting the children's health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and regular physical activity.

2.4 The teachers are hard-working and there is a very strong sense of teamwork. They plan their work regularly and conscientiously. In the best practice, the planning focuses on the intended learning outcomes, the activities and the related resources. As the teachers continue to develop their planning, they need to consider more effective evaluation that will inform future planning.

2.5 The overall planning for numeracy provides guidance for the progressive development of numeracy across the year groups. The numeracy coordinator supports her colleagues effectively and through a recent audit, has identified appropriate priorities for the further development of mathematics. The school uses a range of standardised and non-standardised testing to identify the children's needs and to assess their level of achievement in mathematics. The school's own analysis of the school performance data indicates that the children in key stage (KS) 1 are making good progress and highlights the need to maintain and improve on these standards throughout KS2. The school has identified the need for more effective use of performance data to inform learning and teaching and raise further the standards of attainment. The Inspectorate would endorse this as a priority for ongoing development.

2.6 Most of the teaching in the lessons observed was good or better. In the best practice, the intending learning was shared with the children, reflected on during the lesson and revisited at the end of the lesson. In the mathematic lessons observed the teachers used a range of strategies and resources and often reinforced mathematical language. However, on occasions, the activities did not engage the children fully in the learning and lacked sufficient challenge.

2.7 In the early years the children have opportunities to develop a good foundation in numeracy and to develop their early mathematical ideas through activity-based learning, rhymes and stories. In KS1 the children demonstrate a good understanding of number and show flexibility in their thinking. As they progress through KS2 they continue to consolidate and extend their mathematical learning; they can apply their learning to everyday situations and explain personal strategies to carrying out tasks and they use appropriate mathematical language. Throughout the school most of the children display confidence, motivation and enjoyment in their learning and they present their work well.

2.8 The recent acquisition of wireless laptops provides the teachers with more opportunities to integrate ICT into learning and teaching. In a few of the lessons observed, ICT was used effectively to consolidate learning. It will be important to develop further the use of ICT to support and progress the learning and teaching in mathematics across the school.

2.9 The school has identified almost 26% of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; they use a range of screening and diagnostic tests, together with the teachers' observations to identify those children who will require additional support. The class teacher has overall responsibility for supporting children with additional learning needs. A learning support assistant provides in-class support and withdrawal sessions for children to provide additional help in literacy and numeracy. A number of children receive further assistance through the outreach and peripatetic support programmes provided by the

Belfast Education and Library Board. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) liaises with the class teachers to develop and maintain individual education plans (IEP) which, in the main, identify broad targets and support strategies. Overall, the short term targets in the IEPs need to be more sharply focused to assist the teachers in monitoring and evaluating the children's progress. It will be important to develop further the role and responsibility of the SENCO in order to enable her to monitor and evaluate more effectively the provision for SEN.

2.10 There are clear structures in place for reporting to parents and there are opportunities during the school year for the parents to meet with the teachers to discuss the progress made by their children. The school is committed to communicating with parents on curriculum and pastoral matters; this has been enhanced recently through the creation of a school website. There is an active Parent Teacher Association which raises additional funds for the benefit of the school and the children.

2.11 Appropriate links are maintained with the parents and with external support agencies. Good links have been established with the local pre school playgroup. Year one staff regularly visit the playgroup and useful information is shared to help to ensure that the children make a smooth transition to year one

2.12 The children's written work is marked regularly. In the best practice, the marking provides children with guidance on how they can improve their work. This good practice needs to be disseminated more widely and consistently across the school.

2.13 A good start has been made to developing a culture of self-evaluation within the school. In order to strengthen this process it will be important to develop further the roles and responsibilities of the various post holders in monitoring and evaluating the work within their curricular areas.

2.14 The Principal has been in post since January 2007. He is dedicated to the educational and pastoral needs of the children and strongly supportive of the welfare of the staff. He is ably assisted in his work by his Vice-principal. Since his appointment the Principal has put in place a new School Development Plan which is in line with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and which identifies important areas for development. It will be important to review and adjust the school development to take account of the findings within the inspection report.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the strong inclusive ethos which promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- the effective communication and links with parents, governors and the local playgroup;
- the children's motivation and positive attitudes to learning;
- the good standards in mathematics achieved by the children in KS1;

- the quality of the teaching observed which, in most of the lessons observed, was good or better; and
- the good start made to developing a culture of self-evaluation.

3.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the roles and responsibilities of the various post holders in monitoring and evaluating the work within their curricular areas; and
- make more effective use of school performance data to inform learning and teaching and raise further the standards of attainment.

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

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

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