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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**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**

**Glenann Primary School  
Cushendall**

**Inspected: May 2007**

## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK	1
3.	CONCLUSION	4
	APPENDIX	



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Glenann Primary School is situated at the foot of Glenann, County Antrim. The children who attend the school live in the villages of Cushendun and Cushendall and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has decreased over the last five years and currently stands at 48. Seventeen per cent of the children are entitled to free school meals. Two of the children have been identified 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 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. Thirty-seven questionnaires were issued to parents; approximately 90% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 16 contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires highlighted the family ethos of the school and the approachability of the staff. At the meeting with the governors, the well informed members expressed their appreciation of the dedication and hard work of all the staff, and commented particularly on the commitment of the Principal. A concern regarding accommodation raised by a parent has been discussed with the Principal and the governors.

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

## **2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**

2.1 There is a strong sense of community within the school. A welcoming atmosphere is evident to visitors. The teachers have a good knowledge of the children and their needs, and work hard to develop their self-esteem and confidence. The children hold their teachers in high regard, and they co-operate well with one another; they are interested in their work and try hard to complete their tasks to the best of their ability. The teachers make good use of all available space to support learning in all areas. The entrance to the main building is enhanced by attractive displays highlighting the children's achievements as well as important events in the history of the school. Working relationships at all levels throughout the school are excellent. The school secretary, caretaker, classroom assistants and all other ancillary staff contribute significantly to the life and work of the school. The school is well maintained to high standards of cleanliness.

2.2 There are strong links with the local community particularly in relation to the curriculum. Many visitors to the school come from the local area and are willing to share their knowledge of past and present lifestyles and activities with the children. Effective cross-community links have been established with another primary school. The school has an active Parent Teacher Association who are fully involved with the life and work of the school, particularly in relation to fundraising. In addition the school raises significant funds for a number of local and international charities.

2.3 The school offers a range of enriching extra-curricular activities. The children have many opportunities to perform music, song and dance. Sports activities include hurling, camogie, soccer and cycling proficiency. Good links with local sports clubs ensure that the children have access to playing pitches when competing in inter-school events. Participation in these activities helps the children develop the skills of working together as a team as well as encouraging a sense of inter-dependence.

2.4 There are strengths in many aspects of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars and has identified appropriately areas for improvement. The Principal and the staff are committed to the children and to their care. Concern for the children's safety and well-being, their learning and their personal and social development pervades the life and work of the school. The staff have prepared a wide range of policies to guide the pastoral provision in the school and the Principal ensures that the parents are informed about the school policies and expectations. The staff and governors have identified already the need to update their training for pastoral care and child protection and to review aspects of the policy in order to make certain all the relevant DE Circulars in relation to child protection are implemented fully.

2.5 The school gives consistently good attention to promoting health and well-being and has appropriate policies and programmes in place which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is a 'Whole Food in School' policy and healthy breaks and lunch boxes are encouraged. There is strong evidence of commitment on the part of the staff to promoting healthy eating and to improving the children's eating habits through links with relevant agencies, regular monitoring of their participation in the healthy break scheme, and incentives to reward children when healthy choices are made. There are opportunities to participate in a range of physical activities during the school day. The children demonstrate a good understanding of nutritional messages and the importance of making healthy life choices.

2.6 The quality of teaching observed was always satisfactory; in almost half of the lessons the quality of teaching was consistently good. In the best practice the teachers were clear on the intended learning outcomes for the lesson and mediated these effectively to the children at the beginning of the work. At appropriate points throughout the lesson the children were reminded of the key learning outcomes to be achieved.

2.7 All of the teachers have developed a range of materials which support learning and teaching and plan conscientiously for their composite classes. In some classes the planning takes account of the previous learning and gives opportunities for reviewing and evaluating the children's progress. The school has already identified the need to ensure that all planning builds upon previous learning.

2.8 Talking and listening activities are evident both within the programme for English and in the other subjects throughout the curriculum. In most of the lessons observed, the children were actively engaged in learning through discussion in paired or group work activities, with good opportunities provided for the children to respond. The children are ready and willing to talk with their teachers, peers and with visitors; they are also keen to ask and answer questions in class. The teachers generally place a strong emphasis on the children listening enthusiastically, respectfully and attentively to others and, in the best practice, skilful questioning by the teacher encourages them to speak at length and to justify

and explain their comments and opinions. The children are encouraged to use new words when supporting their comments and the atmosphere within the classrooms allows the children to feel confident when expressing their ideas. The quality and the range of work in talking and listening ranged from satisfactory to excellent.

2.9 Reading is taught systematically throughout the school. In the early years classes the children are encouraged to listen to stories and rhymes, and through shared reading activities they become more familiar with a range of books. The children build upon a phonic awareness and there is evidence to show they have the strategies to read unfamiliar words and to add to their sight vocabulary. In key stage (KS) 2 interesting and age-related novels are introduced and much written work arises from reading this. In the lessons observed the children demonstrated a good understanding and enjoyment of what they read. Many of the children read at home for pleasure and were able to talk confidently about their choice of reading. By the end of year 7 the majority of the children are reading well in line with their ability and a significant number are reading above their ability level.

2.10 Much of the work in talking and listening and reading contributes to the children's writing opportunities. In the early years the children are encouraged to write independently about their experiences and there is evidence to show that the children in year 1 are writing sentences about school visits and other activities. By the end of KS1 most of the children write in paragraphs about personal experiences. In KS2 much of the work is influenced by other areas of the curriculum, particularly in relation to local and national history as well as local folklore. The children respond in a mature manner and some show evidence of developing a style of writing. While much of the work is good there is inappropriate emphasis placed on textbook exercises, particularly at the end of KS1 and KS2. The children need more opportunities to write for an increasing range of purposes and audiences. Overall the children achieve good standards in their literacy work. There is a need to ensure that all planning for literacy adopts a more integrated approach in the areas of talking, listening, reading and writing. There is a need for a yearly overview of all the literacy experiences the children have, to ensure progression and coherence throughout.

2.11 At KS2 the 'Tide Will Tell' project and the 'Clachan' project have been used effectively to develop the children's ICT skills through English, local geography and history. These developments build upon the good work already begun in the early years in integrating the children's experiences in ICT across a range of topics and themes. Importantly the school has begun to monitor and evaluate the progress of individual children against the agreed framework for progression of ICT skills in all strands.

2.12 The children in the early years classes receive regular sessions of play-based learning. In the session observed, the children played co-operatively with one another engaging in activities involving role-play, art, ICT, sand and water. The teacher and classroom assistants interact effectively with the children, supporting them when appropriate. Planning for the play-based sessions outline good opportunities to promote the children's language and numeracy skills. Detailed observations and evaluations allow the teacher and classroom assistants to make appropriate changes to the planning to reflect the children's progress.

2.13 The school has identified three children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The children's learning needs are identified at an early stage through a combination of classroom observations and the use of screening procedures. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the class teachers collaborate to write appropriate

education plans which identify support strategies and targets to promote improvement. The teachers and classroom assistants support the children very well; work is differentiated and generally well-matched to each child's ability level. Strong links are maintained with the parents and with external support agencies.

2.14 The teachers use a variety of standardised and other tests to chart the children's progress. The school has identified the need to develop processes which provide for the assessment of and the assessment for the children's learning. Within classes this will be characterised by the sharing of intended learning outcomes with the children at the beginning of lessons and, at the conclusion, to reflect on the extent to which they have been achieved. An informative verbal assessment report is given to parents in the spring of each year. In addition an annual written report is provided in the summer term. Records of the children's progress are kept from year to year in a personal folder; these records help inform the progress reports provided for parents.

2.15 The Principal has been in post for two years; he is hard-working and displays a strong personal commitment to the school, to the children's welfare and education and to school improvement. His concern and care for the children is evident. He builds well on the good relationships established with the parents, the staff and the children, to ensure a positive ethos permeates the work and life of the school.

2.16 The school development plan (SDP) needs to be updated and reviewed in line with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 2005 Order on School Development Planning, and to reflect the findings of the inspection report.

### 3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the effective leadership of the Principal and his commitment to the education and well-being of the children;
- the excellent behaviour of the children;
- the quality of the teaching which was always satisfactory and in almost half the lessons observed consistently good;
- the good quality of the pastoral care arrangements;
- the effective links to the local community to develop further the children's learning;
- the strong support of the governors, parents and local community to the work and life of the school;
- the effective support provided by the classroom assistants for those children who have additional educational needs;
- the good understanding the children have of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise;

- the good emphasis placed on developing the oral skills of the children; and
- the good standards achieved by the majority of children in literacy.

3.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- update and review the SDP; and
- update and review the training for staff and governors on the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection.

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.



## **APPENDIX**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Security/access arrangements to the outside toilets and the mobile classroom need to be reviewed.

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