

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Glenravel Primary School,
Martinstown, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection
in February 2010

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Glenravel Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 08/02/10**
Martinstown, Ballymena
 ii. **School Reference Number: 303-3311** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 1 Intake	23	20	25	20	21
Enrolments					
Primary	126	131	143	143	149
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium 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):

97.4%

NI Avg Att: 94.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 8 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.6 NI PTR: 20.4

- iii. Average Class Size: 21.3

- iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 25

- v. Ancillary Support:

Number of Hours Per Week:	i. Clerical support:	35
	ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:	35
	iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support:	0

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.7%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 9.4%

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

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 4%

- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2008/09 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 100% **Mathematics** 100%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Glenravel Primary School is situated in the village of Martinstown, on the main road between Ballymena and Cushendall. Most of the children come from within a three mile radius of the school. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past five years and currently stands at 149. Four per cent of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 9% of the children as needing additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection were 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 confidential questionnaires 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.

Ninety-six questionnaires were issued to the parents; approximately 56% were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 23 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires were highly affirmative, indicating very strong support for the work and life of the school. The parents commented positively on the professional and approachable staff and the range of work and experiences provided for their children in school.

Seven of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with six teachers providing additional written comments. These responses were wholly positive commenting on the very good working relationships between the staff and the good standard of the children's behaviour.

The governors expressed firm support for the work of the school. They commented favourably on the standards achieved by the children, the strong sense of collegiality and the welcoming ethos within the school. They praised the commitment of the Principal and the staff's dedication to developing the interests of the children and the role of the school in the local community. Concern was expressed by the governors, teachers and parents about the quality of aspects of the indoor and outdoor accommodation. This issue is addressed in the body of the report and in the appendices.

The children in years 6 and 7 spoke with confidence about what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being and reported that the teaching and support staff are always approachable and caring.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the few other concerns emerging from the parents' and teachers' questionnaires.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is a positive climate for learning which promotes mutual respect throughout the school. A whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour encourages the children to work to the best of their ability and develops their self-esteem and confidence. The children respond well to the staff's expectations for very good behaviour; they are well-mannered, friendly and courteous, and their behaviour is exemplary. The children's work and achievements are celebrated in the bright and attractive displays in the classrooms and corridors throughout the school. In addition, their learning experiences are enriched further through their participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities including music, drama and sports.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued in the relevant Department of Education (DE) circulars. However, the re-constituted governors need to update their child protection training as provided by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board. The designated teacher for child protection and the staff need to consult with parents on the policy documents to reflect more fully the requirements of the DE circulars and the need to update the access to the internet policy.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The nutritional quality of the school meals and the range of food and health programmes available encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has good links with the parents and the local community. Communication with parents is maintained through the weekly newsletter and an induction meeting at the beginning of the school year for the parents of children entering the school. Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school through events such as the Science and Technology Day and the annual Heartstart Skip Challenge which raises money for charity. The children's learning experiences are enriched through educational visits, local visitors to the school and close links with the local parish. The school has meaningful links with external agencies to enhance its provision.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

Most of the children achieve very good standards. They co-operate very well with their peers and work independently and collaboratively in groups and pairs. The children are enthusiastic and engage actively in their learning, displaying high levels of motivation. They demonstrate progression in their learning and in the acquisition and development of social, personal and thinking skills.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance has shown an upward trend and was well above the average for Northern Ireland in 2009. Compared with similar schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics have also risen from below average to well above average.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision in English and literacy is very good.

The key findings are as follows:

- most of the children achieve very good standards in talking and listening, reading and writing;
- the children's talking and listening skills are promoted effectively through class discussions, paired and group work, circle time and presentations. From the foundation stage (FS) to KS2, the children discuss many topical issues that provide them with very good opportunities to construct and make sustained responses and to discuss different perspectives and opinions;
- a literacy rich environment pervades all of the classes; the children enjoy reading for pleasure and extend their knowledge, understanding and reading skills through research projects;
- in the FS, the children are introduced to an appropriate range of reading strategies, including a coherent phonics programme, which enables them to decipher unfamiliar text and they learn to read with increasing fluency and expression;
- the guided reading sessions, across the three key stages, enrich the children's language, deepen their understanding of text and promote the development of thinking skills. By the end of KS2, most of the children read with fluency and understanding and achieve very good standards;
- the children's development of writing is promoted effectively in all key stages. Most of the children's extended and independent writing reaches a very good standard commensurate with their ability. They write in an appropriate variety of forms across the areas of learning; and
- the children make good use of ICT to present their work. In the more effective practice, they are able to re-draft collaboratively prose and presentations.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision in mathematics and numeracy is very good.

The key findings are as follows:

- the children, including the most able, achieve very good standards in mathematics;

- by year 7, most of the children have a very good understanding of place value, number facts, estimation, measures, and shape and space, and are flexible in their mathematical thinking;
- in the FS, the children develop appropriately their understanding of early mathematical concepts through problem-solving activities within play-based learning;
- across all of the key stages, the children use mathematical language accurately and the standards of numeracy presentation are very good;
- the teachers promote effectively and develop systematically the children's mental mathematics strategies; in a majority of classes, the strategies are linked well to the activity of the main lesson;
- the school has made good progress in reviewing the long- and medium-term planning for mathematics at the FS and KS1, and has identified appropriately the need to extend this development work to KS2; and
- in a minority of the classes, the teachers develop effectively the children's self-evaluation and target-setting in mathematics. This approach needs to be adopted more consistently throughout the school.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers are reflective practitioners and prepare very well for lessons. The long-term and medium-term planning provide a clear overview to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning. In the more effective practice, the planning is matched closely to the needs of the children and the teachers' evaluations inform appropriately future action for individual and groups of children. The suitable combination of the teachers' planning and the children's contribution to the development of topic work provide effective links across areas of learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; half was very good, one-quarter was good, and just under a further quarter was satisfactory. The teachers' expectations of the children's learning are appropriately high. In the best practice observed:

- previous learning was built upon appropriately;
- the focus on learning was clear and given a real context;
- the work was matched appropriately to the needs and ability of all of the children;
- the teacher's effective questioning developed the children's understanding and encouraged extended responses; and
- an appropriately wide range of teaching and learning strategies was used, including the effective use of practical resources and active learning approaches.

During these lessons, the children were highly motivated, engaged actively in their learning and achieved very good standards.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and supportively. In the best practice, the children receive helpful feedback on how their learning can be improved. This needs to be applied more consistently by all the teachers.

The school is making good progress in developing the effective use of standardised assessment data to inform teaching and learning. The children in need of additional support with their learning, and the more able children requiring greater challenge, are identified appropriately and their progress monitored using assessment information. The inspection confirms that this is an appropriate area for development. There is now a need to analyse strategically the available data in order to inform self-evaluation, and to develop further the tracking of progress and target-setting for individual children and at whole-school level.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The provision for children with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) supports effectively the class teacher with the identification of appropriate targets for the individual education plans (IEPs). In addition, the SENCO consults with the children and their parents, the classroom assistant and external agencies, where appropriate, about the learning support and the children's progress. The IEP targets are specific, monitored closely, reviewed regularly and inform classroom practice.

The children receive in-class support from their teacher, and a small number of the children receive peripatetic support. They respond well to this support and are gaining in confidence. There is evidence to show that actions taken have resulted in a majority of the children making good progress.

Good progress has been made in addressing the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Disability Order (SENDO) within the school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal demonstrates a strong commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of the children and the staff. He promotes very good collegiality among the staff and operates a collaborative decision-making approach within the school which supports effectively curricular development. There is good internal communication at all levels.

The roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators have been reviewed appropriately in light of the current needs of the school. In the best practice, the co-ordinator monitors the teachers' evaluations of learning and the standards of the children's work. The Principal and the co-ordinators need to extend this good practice across the school and develop a more rigorous and systematic approach towards monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the children's learning experiences in order to meet fully the needs of all of the children and promote school improvement.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's process for improvement is linked to a school development plan (SDP). In order to comply more fully with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, there is a need to set whole-school targets, order the priorities for development, and to consult with the parents and the children when preparing the SDP. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation and the school demonstrates effectively a commitment to action planning to develop, for example, literacy and numeracy.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The staff development programme is linked to the SDP priorities. However, the Principal needs to review the arrangements for staff development to ensure that they meet effectively the needs of the school and of the individual teachers.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

There are deficiencies in the school accommodation which consists of the main school building and temporary classrooms; however, effective use is made of the available accommodation to support teaching and learning. Health and safety issues relating to the school's accommodation are detailed in Appendix 1.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the provision in literacy and numeracy, including the high standards achieved by the children by the end of KS2;
- the highly motivated children who demonstrate the ability to learn collaboratively and independently;
- the quality of the teaching which was very good in half of the lessons observed, and good in a further quarter;
- the very good quality of the provision for children with special educational needs;
- the quality of the climate for learning which promotes mutual respect throughout the school; and
- the collegial working relationships between the staff which support effectively curricular development.

5.2 The area for improvement is:

- to develop a more rigorous and systematic approach towards monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the children's learning experiences in order to meet fully the needs of all of the children and promote school improvement.

5.3 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 Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Access arrangements to the playground and the school buildings need to be reviewed urgently to ensure the safety of the children at all times.

ACCOMMODATION

- There is a lack of toileting facilities in the temporary classrooms.
- There is a lack of indoor facilities for play and physical education.

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