



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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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

**Gorran Primary School
Blackhill, Coleraine**

Inspected: October 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Gorran Primary Coleraine** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 06.10.08**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-6055** iv. **Nature of Inspection: FI/En/Ma/ICT**

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	7	19	17	7	10
Enrolments					
Primary	103	109	109	108	101
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): 97.1%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 5.4 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.7 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 20.2
- iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 27
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 11 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 20 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 20 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 11%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 6%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Gorran Primary School is situated three miles north of Garvagh, County Londonderry. Most of the pupils travel to school by car or bus from within a radius of approximately four miles. The enrolment has been steady in recent years although it has fallen slightly to 101 this current year. Six per cent of the children are entitled to receive free school meals. Eleven per cent of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the quality of the work in English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, including the contribution of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting the learning in these two areas. 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 of pastoral care and child protection 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. Sixty-eight questionnaires were issued to the parents; 75% of these were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 22 contained written comments. Four of the staff responded to the online questionnaire with one additional written comment. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated the parents feel that their children are safe, secure and well-settled at the school.

The governors expressed their appreciation of the work of the staff, particularly the Principal, and reported that they were kept well-informed of the school development planning process and the standards achieved by the children.

The teachers indicated that the pastoral care provided for the children is a strength of the school. They reported that they enjoy working at the school and believe they have opportunities to be involved in the decision-making processes.

The children talked with enthusiasm about the many aspects of school life and, from the discussions, there is evidence that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their care and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and the governors the main issues emerging from the questionnaires.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

A strong family ethos permeates the life of the school. There are good working relationships between the children and their teachers. The children are well-behaved; they are friendly to visitors and are willing to talk about their work.

The quality of the pastoral care in the school is very good. The strengths include the range and quality of the strategies to celebrate the children's achievements, the extent to which the children's views are considered when formulating acceptable behaviours in classes and the effective leadership of the designated and the deputy designated teachers.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The arrangements for child protection in the school are very good. The school provides a secure learning environment for the children in which they feel valued and at ease. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff and parents are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to the range of effective policies on child protection.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The staff encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through the promotion and provision of healthy breaks, the links with external agencies and the participation in the Comenius programme.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children work well in class, demonstrating a high level of motivation and perseverance in their work. By key stage (KS) 2, they are capable of working collaboratively in groups, each child taking his or her role within the group willingly and with confidence. During the inspection, there was evidence that the children are developing strategies to aid their thinking skills through, for example, the use of mind maps.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The school's literacy programme provides a broad variety of stimulating experiences for the children in each year group. They have many good opportunities to develop their skills in talking and listening, reading and writing in English lessons and in other areas of the curriculum.

The younger children develop their talking and listening skills through well-planned interactions with their teachers, for example, the matching of animals whose names rhymed. The older children have good opportunities to communicate their ideas by, for example, making PowerPoint presentations to their peers and wider audiences. A feature of the lively question and answer sessions observed was the thinking time given by the teachers for the children to consider their answers carefully. Visiting speakers often talk to the children about their work and interests, and these visits stimulate the children's interest in, for example, writing letters to people identified in the talks.

The children's reading skills are developed regularly and systematically. The classroom displays provide a text-rich environment that facilitates learning and stimulates interest in reading; a wide range of reading material, which is available in all classrooms, is used by the children in both formal and informal situations. The teachers employ a wide variety of

teaching strategies and suitable resources to support the children's reading. A helpful commercial reading scheme underpins the programme, and a wide range of novels is used effectively to stimulate the children's interest in reading. Reading packs designed to help the parents work with their children are a feature of the provision. The school monitors the standards in reading through regularly administered standardised tests. These tests show that most of the children reach a standard of reading comparable to, or above, that of children of their own age.

The younger children record in their own language during play-based activities. Shared-writing and mind-mapping are used effectively to encourage writing. As the children progress through the school, they have increased opportunities to develop their writing skills in meaningful contexts, often from personal experience. Appropriately, the staff has identified in the literacy action plan the need to improve progression in the children's writing skills. Information and communication technology is used well as a teaching tool to develop the children's language and literacy skills; for example, the younger children use simple word-processing software to support their writing, while the older children enhance their writing through researching topics on the Internet.

Most of the children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in English by the end of KS2. During the inspection, there was evidence that the quality of writing by the highest attaining children in previous years was very good.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

There are significant strengths in the mathematics provision. Numeracy lessons start with effective warm-up exercises through which the children learn the number system and become competent at mental mathematics strategies, which, by KS2, can involve appropriately challenging questions. A range of practical equipment is used effectively to lay the foundation for future more abstract work; for example, in KS1 the number bonds for the number eleven were discovered through the use of Cuisenaire rods, and in KS2 different two-dimensional templates were available to help the children construct and draw tessellations. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage the children in challenging problems on the Internet.

The scheme of work for numeracy provides helpful guidance to ensure appropriate progression in the children's mathematical understanding. In the foundation stage, the children are given opportunities to sort and match as a basis for their understanding of number. In KS2, the children are developing the beginnings of algebra through recognising patterns and rules in sequences. The scheme also identifies activities that promote group collaborative work, and during the inspection the children responded well to these opportunities and were beginning to develop their mathematical thinking through sharing their ideas and reasoning.

A feature of the best practice observed was the strong linkage between literacy and numeracy; for example, the children in KS1 followed-up the charting of data using ICT by talking about the information that could be inferred from the chart, while there was evidence of the children in KS2 being able to deduce, write and present their findings from a group

investigation of the regular two-dimensional shapes. These opportunities for connective learning often arose when the mathematics was planned as part of a theme. As a result, and appropriately, the children are beginning to use their mathematical skills and understanding in a range of contexts.

During the inspection, the children demonstrated their ability to think mathematically at a high level relative to their age. By the end of KS2, most children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in mathematics, and a significant minority achieve the highest level of attainment.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The schemes of work provide a helpful overview for the teaching and learning. The teachers' daily planning, which draws upon the schemes, is effective: the teachers are well-prepared for their lessons. The staff are currently developing their medium-term planning in line with the broad aims of the new curriculum. Appropriately, they are evaluating the activities identified in the thematic planning to enable its review. In the best practice, teachers are also annotating all their planning with notes to improve future teaching and learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching in most of the lessons observed was good or better. In the best practice: the lessons were well-planned; there was appropriate pace and challenge; the teachers had high expectations; and, there were good working relationships between the teachers and the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and thoroughly. In the best practice, particularly in literacy, the teachers supplement their encouraging comments by helpful insights that indicate how the children can improve. A good start has been made in using Assessment for Learning strategies; in particular, the children are provided with opportunities to assess their own learning and communicate simply their evaluations to the teacher. The teachers' assessment is supplemented appropriately by the use of a range of standardised tests.

3.4 ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified appropriately through both the teachers' evaluations and the use of a comprehensive range of standardised tests. The procedures relating to the children's educational plans (EPs) are effective: they are drawn up by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in consultation with the class teacher; they outline appropriate targets for the children's learning; and, they are reviewed biannually. The children are provided with in-class support and, where appropriate, sessions involving personnel from external agencies. There is evidence of the children

making progress through this support. Currently, the support is centred mainly on the literacy needs of the children; the staff need to extend, when appropriate, the use of numeracy targets in the EPs in order that in-class numeracy support is more sharply focused and that the parents are informed of how they may help their child.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal has been in position for 15 years, during which period the enrolment has more than doubled. She has developed a strong team-spirit amongst the staff and has led the school effectively, embracing the many initiatives over the years with commitment and dedication.

The Principal is ably supported by the teaching staff, all of whom have responsibility for co-ordinating aspects of the work of the school. The Literacy Co-ordinator has recently taken up the position and is beginning to review the priorities for the literacy plan. The Numeracy Co-ordinator, who is the Principal, is leading the staff effectively in addressing important areas of development, for example, the use of the interactive whiteboard to develop mental mathematics. The SENCO is highly committed to supporting the children who have additional needs; she manages the procedures and practices effectively and liaises well with the North-Eastern Education and Library Board Educational Psychology Team. Currently, the monitoring and evaluation of the provision is achieved through informal procedures; the co-ordinators need to formalise the monitoring and evaluation within their areas of responsibility to ensure that the good provision and high standards are built upon.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school development plan (SDP) is compliant with DE's regulations; the associated action plans, particularly those for literacy and numeracy, are clear and outline appropriate parameters to enable their successful implementation. Each year the teachers evaluate the success of the actions undertaken; areas for improvement are identified and these help generate the following year's targets. This review process is a strength of the management of the school.

Appropriately, the school continues to use the whole-school self-evaluation tool developed by the Partnership Management Board, adding annually evaluations against the areas that were originally identified as requiring improvement. This process supplements effectively the review of the SDP mentioned above.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the strong family ethos;
- the arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection;
- the quality of most of the teaching observed;

- the effective leadership of the Principal and co-ordinators;
- the whole-school self-evaluation processes; and
- the standards achieved by the children.

5.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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