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*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

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Focused Inspection**

**Killinchy Primary School  
Co Down**

**Inspected: October 2009**

## CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	4
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	6
	APPENDIX	

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Killinchy Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 12/10/09**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-6396** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 1 Intake	37	36	50	33	41
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	319	309	320	286	281
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):

96.4%

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): 14 0 0 0  
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.07 NI PTR: 20.4
- iii. Average Class Size: 21.53
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 27
- v. Ancillary Support:  
Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 37  |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 40  |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 100 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.13%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 13.2%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 2.5%

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Killinchy Primary School is situated on an attractive elevated site in the centre of Killinchy, County Down. The school was formed from an amalgamation of five small primary schools in 1984 and serves a rural catchment area; most of the children travel to school by car or bus from within a radius of approximately ten kilometres. The current enrolment is 281 children and has remained steady in recent years. Approximately 3% of the children are entitled to receive free school meals and just over 13% of the children in the mainstream of the school are identified as having special educational needs (SEN).

### 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. The contribution of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting the learning and teaching, and 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 included the opportunity for the parents to complete confidential questionnaires 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 forty-nine questionnaires were issued to parents; approximately 59% of these were returned to the Department of Education (DE). Forty-three returns contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the provision of the school. In particular, the parents and governors highlighted the commitment of staff, the strong sense of community and the happy atmosphere throughout the school.

The governors spoke very positively about the good working relationships within the school and with parents, the hard work of the staff and the very good standards attained by the children.

The children in year 6 spoke about their enjoyment of school life, reported that they feel safe, and know whom to contact if they have a concern. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The school has a caring, welcoming and friendly atmosphere and there are excellent working relationships at all levels. The children are very well-behaved, polite and friendly to visitors and are happy to talk about their work. The teachers motivate the children well through good use of praise, encouragement and rewards systems. The children are enthusiastic in their learning and are considerate and helpful to one another. They enjoy being involved in decision-making through the recently formed school council and have recently been closely involved in the choice and purchase of playground equipment. The members of staff give generous amounts of time to the broad range of after school activities provided for the children from year 2 and above who benefit from the opportunity to participate in sporting activities, French and Spanish, cycling proficiency and embroidery. In addition a 'Two o'clock club' is available for the younger children and a homework club for the older children. The school is well-

maintained resulting from investment in re-decoration; the school staff make good use of the available space both indoors and outdoors to create a bright and attractive learning environment. The helpful and hard-working support staff contribute to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the school.

## 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

## 1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of the wide range of sporting opportunities and healthy school dinners which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## 2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 2.1 LEARNING

The children demonstrate a high level of interest, motivation and perseverance in their work; they work well independently, in pairs and collaboratively when in larger groups. The children make good or better progress in their learning and the majority achieve very good standards. Those who require additional help are identified at an early stage and receive appropriate support within the school, and from the Cottown Reading Support Unit where appropriate, helping them to attain good standards in their work.

### 2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English, the school's performance is consistently well above the Northern Ireland average. Compared with schools in a similar free school meal category, the levels of attainment in English are also above the average.

The quality of provision in English is very good. The teachers provide a literacy rich environment which supports effectively all aspects of the children's language development. There is a good range of quality books for the children to use both within class libraries, incorporated into displays linked to current topics and the recently developed non-fiction library. Children throughout the school show an interest in reading for both pleasure and for information. The well developed cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning benefits the children's learning further by effectively integrating the teaching of English and literacy into meaningful contexts which interest and motivate the children.

A particular feature of the whole school is the children's confidence and competence to express themselves orally as they talk about their experiences and contribute to class discussions. The teachers frequently use a good range of strategies to promote the children's thinking and encourage the use of a rich vocabulary during group, paired and whole class work. During the inspection the very good examples observed included the children in foundation stage (FS) explaining their learning during well managed plenary sessions, children in KS1 having concentrated discussions in pairs to discuss prior learning and in KS2 children demonstrating the ability to justify their arguments and discuss their points of view. The effective use of drama and role-play further enhances these experiences for the children.

The children's written work is of a high quality. It is very well presented and the children make good progress in writing with increasing accuracy and proficiency as they move through the school. In the FS the children are provided with meaningful contexts including play based activities to experiment with writing, form letters and write for a purpose. In KS1 the opportunities for writing are developed further through a range of genre including poetry and story writing using strategies including modelled and independent writing. By the end of KS2 the children are completing an appropriate range of writing to good standards. The examples of good writing include well structured informative report writing and imaginative poetry.

By the end of KS2 most children are reading at a level above their chronological age. They read with enjoyment and demonstrate good fluency and expression. Individual children are offered additional support through a range of means including the effective reading partnership scheme, differentiated teaching and learning activities within classes and withdrawal support. There is evidence that the children are making improvements as a result of this intervention. The staff use a suitable range of approaches to the teaching of reading including shared, modelled and guided reading. Reading sessions are well managed and much thought has been given to motivating the children as readers through the range of reading materials well matched to the children's interests and needs.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to support the teaching of reading and writing. In the best practice the children have ready access to suitable ICT equipment which is supporting their class work in a meaningful way. By year 7 the children demonstrate some effective use of ICT, for example composing lesson notes electronically.

The children's progress and attainment in English and literacy is monitored effectively at KS1 and KS2 through a range of appropriate standardised tests. The test results are analysed and the findings used by individual teachers to identify individual children who require further support with aspects of their literacy and areas for further development for the whole class. The teachers are developing approaches to monitor the development of children's language and literacy skills in the FS. The teachers are, under the leadership of the literacy co-ordinator and with the support of the Principal, developing the teaching of reading in the school. They have also developed a useful non-fiction library and put in place a successful Reading Partnership programme. The teachers have developed the written planning in a cross curricular approach integrating very well the reading, writing, talking and listening with relevant topics which the children enjoy. The teachers have developed an effective policy which gives the children a good range of approaches for their English homework. The literacy co-ordinator has updated the literacy policy recently and an action plan identifies some suitable targets for future development; these should be built on further as the priority for whole school development in literacy for the coming year.

## 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data indicates that in mathematics the school's performance is consistently well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The level of attainment is also above the average when compared with schools in a similar free schools meals category. The staff make very good use of all the data available and use the information to identify the needs of individuals and groups and to guide teaching and learning. Effective strategies are implemented to support learning needs which include differentiated work, additional resources and specific special needs support.

The quality of provision in mathematics is very good. The numeracy co-ordinator provides outstanding leadership and has a clear vision for the development of this area of the school's work. Regular meetings, school-based staff training sessions, collaborative planning and consistent and thorough monitoring and evaluation of the children's learning, contribute to

the high standards achieved in mathematics within the classes. Overall, the standards achieved by the children in mathematics and numeracy are excellent. By year 7 almost all the children are attaining standards in mathematics that are in line with, or for a few, above their age and ability levels.

A comprehensive scheme of work for mathematics has been developed and provides a useful framework within which the teachers create their medium and short-term planning. The medium term plans identify clearly the intended learning outcomes for each area, the differentiated activities, related resources and mathematical language to be developed. In the best practice, the teachers complete evaluations regularly which focus on the extent of the children's learning.

The emphasis placed on developing Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and active learning encourages the children to express their thoughts and ideas about their work in mathematics confidently and articulately and to interact with teachers and peers in a purposeful manner. During the inspection the vast majority of the mathematics lessons observed were interesting, challenging and enjoyable.

The staff have given a high priority to the development of mental maths across the school and this has been incorporated well into the lessons. In the best practice observed, these sessions were connected to, and laid a foundation for, the work in the main part of the mathematics lesson.

ICT is used effectively in numeracy lessons, with teachers making good use of computer programs and websites to support learning and teaching.

In the FS, the children are provided with a stimulating and rich environment that promotes mathematical awareness and language. The effective use of practical equipment helps to consolidate and extend their understanding of sorting, pattern making, shape, number and the operations of addition and subtraction. The high quality interaction of the staff with the children promotes their attainment of the basic numeracy skills and concepts effectively. In the best practice, the teachers also challenged and extended the children's mathematical thinking.

In KS1, the children's experiences in number, shape and space, measures and handling data are extended appropriately. There is evidence of progression in the learning and the children display good recall and application of number.

In KS2, the majority of the children display a positive attitude to mathematics and continue to develop their mathematical competence. They also demonstrate an agility and flexibility in their mathematical thinking. During discussions with the year 4 and the year 7 children they considered a range of processes competently to complete particular number tasks and spoke confidently about the practical application of mathematics.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The teachers have worked collaboratively to review and develop all aspects of planning within the school. The teachers' schemes of work provide a detailed overview for learning and teaching across the curriculum. The teachers' medium and short-term planning, which is linked to the schemes, is very effective and all of the teachers are well-prepared for their lessons. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are used well to support the children with additional needs.

### 3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, a majority of the teaching observed was very good or better with one fifth of the lessons evaluated as outstanding. The teachers have high expectations and the lessons are well-planned with a good range of learning activities and resources. In the best practice there is skilful questioning, appropriate pace and challenge, and the class work is differentiated well for the range of ability. The teachers build effectively on the children's previous learning and engage the children well in interesting lessons with clearly defined learning intentions. In the FS and in KS1, play is used effectively to enrich and extend the children's skills and understanding of literacy and numeracy. The school's computer suite provides valuable opportunities for the children to enhance their reading, writing and design skills. The ICT co-ordinator has completed a comprehensive audit which identifies progression across the key stages and in addition the current teachers' planning includes helpful reference to the development of specific ICT skills. By year 7 the children have successfully participated in the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT accreditation scheme.

### 3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school has very good and regular arrangements in place for monitoring, recording and reporting the progress of each child from KS1. Assessment processes have a high profile in the teachers' class work and are used well each month to inform the teachers' planning for whole-class and individual work. The children's work is marked regularly, often with helpful comments which help them to understand better what they need to do to improve further; this practice needs to be consistently applied throughout the school. Data is used effectively, particularly by the mathematics co-ordinator, to analyse learning throughout the school and to set targets. The teachers are developing their approach to including the children in their own assessment. The end of year written summative reports to parents are detailed and well considered.

### 3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works hard, guided by a sensible agreed policy which is mirrored in the effective practice. She leads by example and teachers across the school value her advice and commitment. In the best practice teaching and learning strategies are differentiated appropriately by class teachers for the children. Information and communication technology is used well to promote learning for those children who can benefit from specific assistive technology and classroom resources are appropriate and stimulating. The children's needs are identified early and the school staff work diligently with parents to address any concerns. The IEPs inform the work for some 13% of the children identified as requiring specific additional support and outline detailed measures which meet their needs in the classroom. A part time teacher for special needs provides effective withdrawal sessions where the children work on literacy and numeracy. In addition the school is a base for the Cottown Reading Support Unit whose teacher provides literacy support for a number of neighbouring schools. The school avails of a useful network of outside agencies to supplement and guide their work, for example good use is made of multi-disciplinary advice from the Linked Independent Living and Advice Centre (LILAC), Fleming Fulton.



## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 LEADERSHIP**

The Principal was appointed in 2006 and his leadership is outstanding. He has developed an effective team-spirit and collegiality amongst the staff, utilising their expertise and interests to good effect. He shows good strategic leadership ensuring vision and clear educational and pastoral direction for the work of the school and promotes and sustains improvements in standards and in the quality of provision. He is very ably supported by the Vice-principal and by the whole school team. A reflective culture of self evaluation is established in the school and the school addresses effectively the need for continuous development to raise standards further and to promote best practice.

### **4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The school development plan is compliant with the Department of Education School Development Planning Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005/19. The Principal has placed a strong focus on numeracy and literacy in promoting the children's learning and has invested substantially in ICT. Staff development has been used very effectively to enhance the skills and knowledge of the teachers and school leadership. The Principal and staff are dedicated and committed to the life and work of the school and to the well-being of the children; they know the children and their families well.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the outstanding school ethos characterised by the very high quality pastoral care and by the standard of working relationships throughout the school;
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal;
- the children's positive and enthusiastic engagement in all of their learning, and their exemplary behaviour;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was consistently good or better;
- the very high standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy; and
- the hard working and committed school team who provide effective and enjoyable learning experiences for 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 children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES**

As a matter of urgency the SEELB should address the following:

- there is no fire escape from the upper storey of the school where there are two classrooms and an ICT suite; and
- the stairs to the upper storey of the school need to be inspected to ensure that they conform to building regulations.

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

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