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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

Lisanally School
Armagh

Inspected: September 2009

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STATISTICAL INFORMATION (SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

- 1.1 i. **School: Lisanally School** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 28/09/09**
Armagh
- ii. **School Reference Number: 531-6577** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

1.2

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total Enrolment	96	94	94	95	99

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.

- 1.3 Number of Pupils in Outreach Programme: 0
- 1.4 Average Attendance for the Previous School Year: 92.15%
- 1.5 i. Number of Teachers in School: 14 on Outreach Programme: 0.5
 (including the Principal and p/t teachers)
 (f/t equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (pupil/teacher ratio): 8.25
- iii. Average Class Size: 8
- iv. Number of Classroom Assistants: 26.7
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours per week:

 Clerical Support: 36.25
- vi. Percentage of children in receipt of free school meals: 68%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lisanally School is situated in the city of Armagh and provides education for 99 pupils aged from three to 19 years of age who have severe learning difficulties. The children travel to the school by bus and taxi from a wide geographical area.

1.2 The pleasant school accommodation is supplemented by a mobile classroom, the Vocational Training Unit (VTU), for the pupils over the age of 16 years.

1.3 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the school staff 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 pupils. Ninety-five questionnaires were issued to the parents; 41% of these were returned to the Department of Education and 24 contained written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated the parents are very happy with the whole-school provision and with the very good communication and support they receive from the school. Eleven teachers and 16 members of the support staff completed the confidential online questionnaire. Their responses affirmed the work of the school. The governors expressed their appreciation for the very positive continuing development of the school provision, the efficient management of the school budget and the excellent leadership of the Principal. The governors raised concern over the adequacy of the teaching space in the school for the present pupil numbers. The pupils spoke very positively about their experiences in school. They reported that they feel safe and know whom to turn to if they have any concerns about their care and well-being. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the findings from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.4 The evidence used during this inspection included the observation of 38 lessons, interviews with the Principal, co-ordinators, teachers, governors and pupils. The school development plan (SDP), the pupils' work, school documentation, policies and teachers' planning were scrutinised.

1.5 The focus of the inspection was on the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of the provision for learning, the leadership and management of the school and the arrangements for child protection and pastoral care.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 Throughout the inspection, the pupils' standards of achievements were judged in relation to their previous educational records.

2.2 Lisanally School is a very good school. The pupils progress very well in their learning and achieve high standards commensurate with their ability. The pupils behave well and are helpful to each other and visitors to the school. All the pupils achieve the individual education programme (IEP) targets set for them by their teachers. By the end of key stage (KS) 4 the pupils have gained confidence and are more independent as they move to the VTU and use their language, literacy and numeracy skills effectively within a range of

contexts in the school environment and beyond. The school has identified appropriate external accreditation and awards for pupils across a wide range of subjects and activities. All of the pupils achieve good external accreditation in areas appropriate for their level of development by the time they leave the school.

2.3 A small minority of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and follow an appropriate and well planned sensory programme which is accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). At the end of KS2 five out of 22 pupils achieved the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) information and communication technology (ICT) accreditation level 1 for communication. At the end of KS3 three out of 28 pupils achieve CCEA KS3 ICT communication level 2 or level 3. By the end of their school careers the pupils achieve a good range of unit awards from ASDAN, Goal Adult Literacy, the Oxford Cambridge RSA Examination Body, the Open College Network ICT entry level 3, the British Safety Council entry level award, CCEA Occupational Studies, National Vocational Qualification level 1 and level 2 and the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance entry level 3, unit 1 in French and entry level 1-3, units 1-3 in mathematics. Non-academic awards achieved by the pupils include Heartstart, the Southern Education and Library Board Music Service Awards and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The data arising from the assessments and accreditation attained by the pupils should be collated and analysed further and used to inform individual and whole-school target setting.

2.4 The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the provision of healthy food in the canteen, healthy breaks of fruit and toast, the very high standard of physical education teaching, the involvement of sports coaches in the school games training and a joint pupil and parent after school exercise club which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.5 The inspection findings identified the following strengths in the achievements of the pupils:

- the broad range of appropriate accreditation and the good standards achieved by a majority of the pupils;
- the good progress made by all of the pupils in achieving their IEP targets;
- the marked improvement in the pupils' engagement in healthy eating and exercise opportunities;
- the exemplary behaviour demonstrated by the pupils throughout the school; and
- the confidence, independence and skills attained by the pupils during the transition from school to adult life.

3. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 The quality of teaching in the school is consistently good or better. The members of the school staff have developed a warm, happy, secure and stimulating environment in which the pupils can achieve their potential. The teachers' planning throughout the school is of a very high standard; it has a cohesive framework and uses a thematic approach encompassing

the curriculum and addressing the individual needs of the pupils. A wide range of teaching and learning approaches within appropriate contexts are used to develop the learner's key skills and knowledge. The dissemination of the very good practice in the school, particularly in the use of interactive whiteboards, would further improve the learning and teaching throughout the school. The school offers a wide range of subjects and activities including the Northern Ireland Curriculum and places much emphasis on ICT. There is a well resourced sensory curriculum for those pupils requiring this approach. The school offers a good range of extended activities, including Heartstart and road safety exercises, which enrich and extend the pupil's experiences. The speech and occupational therapists and the physiotherapist in the school work closely with the class teams, particularly in the classes of younger pupils, in order to maximise the impact of their expertise on the pupils' progression. This is good practice and enables the therapists to share effective therapy techniques with the teachers and classroom assistants and improve further the progress made by the pupils in those classes.

3.2 The school is an active member of the local Area Learning Community and has developed strong links with a broad range of local schools. The school has established a Parent/Teacher Association and parents engage well with the school. The Early Years Project, in particular, develops close links with the families involved through home visits and the electronic recording and sharing of the children's progress. This solid foundation is reflected in the good home/school relationships which are sustained as the children move through the school. The parents comment that they feel valued and supported, and receive useful information about their children's progress. Most of the pupils in the VTU attend the Southern Regional College (SRC) each week where they participate well and benefit from a range of courses including brickwork, hospitality and catering multi-skills, manicure and ICT. The pupils are accompanied by members of school staff which enables the learning to be reinforced and extended appropriately when back in school. The school environment is very well cared for and maintained and there is colourful art work by pupils and extensive displays of photographs of school events.

3.3 The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the pupils. These arrangements reflect fully the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

3.4 The provision for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There is a caring and supportive ethos throughout the school which ensures highly positive working relationships among members of staff and the pupils. The members of the support staff contribute significantly to the pupils' well-being and their learning experiences. In addition, the sporting and cultural activities offered within the school and the community are successful in raising the self-esteem of the pupils.

3.5 The inspection findings identified the following strengths in the quality of the provision for learning:

- the broad and appropriate curriculum developed for the pupils;
- the good standard of teaching throughout the school;
- the close contact maintained between the school and the parents; and
- the very good team-work observed between teachers, classroom assistants, therapists and ancillary staff.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The leadership in the school is outstanding. The management teams, including the heads of department and co-ordinators, work hard and provide good quality support for the Principal and the school. The Principal has redeployed all the members of staff as a result of a whole-school review and this has further motivated the school community. The extensive staff development undertaken in the school has led to enhanced expertise in the curriculum and in the school management. A culture of self-evaluation is becoming well established throughout the school. The Principal and members of the management teams monitor and evaluate the teachers' planning effectively. The school is well organised and focuses well on the needs of the pupils. The Vice-principal was absent at the time of the inspection.

4.2 The improvement process is clearly linked to a very well-constructed SDP. There are excellent opportunities for consultation about the SDP within the school community with thorough analysis of responses. Policies and programmes are in place and are regularly reviewed by the staff and the governors. The school gives very good attention and meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 The main strengths of the leadership and management of the school are:

- the hard-working Principal who provides very good strategic leadership;
- the effective delegation of management roles to teachers through the development of management teams;
- the development of positive working relationships amongst the local school community; and
- the effective results of the staff development programme in the school.

5. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 The overall effectiveness of the school shows strengths in all aspects of the areas inspected.

5.2 Since the last focused inspection of 2005 the school has developed the creative and sensory areas of the curriculum well.

5.3 The inspection has identified the following strengths:

- the outstanding inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school;
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal;
- the consistently good standard of teaching;
- the very effective team-work amongst the school management, teachers, therapists, classroom assistants, and ancillary staff;

- the very good working relationships developed with parents and with the community; and
- the pupils' achievement of the appropriate and broad range of accreditation from the school, a wide range of external accreditation bodies, the SRC and the wider community.

5.4 The inspection has identified the following area for improvement:

- to collate, analyse and use further the data arising from the pupils' assessments and accreditation to inform individual and whole-school target-setting.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 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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