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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**Department of Education  
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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

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

**Longstone School  
Dundonald**

**Inspected: April 2008**

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## STATISTICAL INFORMATION (SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

1.1 i. **School: Longstone School  
Dundonald**

iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 28.04.08**

ii. **School Reference Number: 431-6273**

iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

1.2

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total Enrolment	190	198	187	171	183

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: 214

1.4 Average Attendance for the Previous School Year: 88.2%

1.5 i. Number of Teachers in School: 31 on Outreach Programme: 12  
(including the Principal and p/t teachers)  
(f/t equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

ii. PTR (pupil/teacher ratio): 9.6

iii. Average Class Size: 10

iv. Number of Classroom Assistants: 21

v. Ancillary Support:  
Number of Hours per week:

Clerical Support: 251.75

vi. Percentage of children in receipt of free  
school meals: 37%

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Longstone School is situated in Dundonald and serves a wide catchment area which includes Dundonald and the surrounding area. It provides education in the main school for 183 pupils aged from five to 16 years with moderate learning difficulties. The school has a behaviour support unit of three classes to which key stage (KS) 1 and KS2 pupils may be referred for two terms through the South-Eastern Education and Library Board. In addition the unit provides outreach behaviour support for almost 70 pupils in mainstream primary schools. The school has a reading support unit based in Cottown where 25 KS2 pupils receive full-time support for one year on site and a total of 130 primary and post-primary pupils receive part-time specialist teaching and support. The school has a learning support outreach service for eleven pupils in seven primary schools.

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. One hundred and sixty-six parental questionnaires were issued to parents and 49 were returned. Of these, 23 parents took the opportunity to submit a written response. Most parents commented on how happy their children are in Longstone School and felt that the management and staff are friendly and approachable. A few parents raised specific concerns which were discussed with the Principal. The Board of Governors (governors) met with the inspectors and expressed their satisfaction with the work of the school and hoped that accommodation difficulties would be addressed. The governors were also concerned that education in Longstone School could be provided only up to the age of 16 years despite the possibility that some pupils may benefit from up to two further years in the school. The pupils, in discussion with the inspection team, indicated their awareness of arrangements to ensure their safety and security in school.

1.3 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 In this report, standards of achievement are judged in relation to the pupils' previous attainments, their individual abilities and their special educational needs.

2.2 The school is a supportive and caring environment where the pupils are valued and encouraged. During the inspection the pupils' behaviour was very good. There are opportunities for the pupils to achieve across a range of appropriate accreditation including the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Entry Level Examinations and Duke of Edinburgh Awards; the current planning to seek further opportunities for accreditation is timely. The school has achieved noteworthy success over several years in the annual Bombardier competition. Almost all learners have a sense of achievement and enjoyment and display positive attitudes to learning.

2.3 The behaviour support unit provides a supportive and highly skilled environment in which most of the pupils achieve robust skills which enable them to improve their behaviour and social skills and to achieve improved standards in literacy and numeracy. The Cottown reading support unit provides a setting where all of the pupils make steady or good progress in literacy and in reading, in particular; further, their confidence, self-esteem and

organisational skills are much enhanced. The pupils in mainstream schools supported by the outreach learning support team gain skills which enable most to access learning and consequently achieve better progress.

2.4 The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective programmes in place, for example, meaningful links with external agencies helping to make food experiences real for pupils, practical cookery opportunities and incentives for making healthy food choices at break time, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.5 The inspection findings indicate the following achievements and standards:

- the steady progress made by the pupils in line with their ability;
- the clear evidence of progress made by the pupils in the behaviour support unit, reading support unit and those receiving outreach learning support;
- the courteous and polite behaviour of the pupils;
- the programme for the promotion of health and well-being;
- the good results achieved by pupils in CCEA Entry Level Examinations, especially in mathematics and in science; and
- the success of the pupils in inter-school competitions, including the Bombardier competition.

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

3.1 The teachers and staff of the school are hard-working and show a high level of commitment to the education and care of the pupils. The majority of the teaching motivates the pupils during lessons, stimulates interest and encourages the pupils to persevere and complete their tasks. The classroom assistants support the teachers with skill and enthusiasm. The technician and teachers collaborate well together ensuring that specialist support enhances the work in the classroom, especially in information and communication technology (ICT) and in technology. The pupils would benefit from the provision of more ICT resources within the classroom.

3.2 There is a broad, relevant curriculum which has particular strengths at KS3 where a more active approach to learning using relevant materials and resources and a more integrated cross-curricular topic based approach is motivating and engaging the pupils well. During the inspection, all of the lessons observed were sound with some 92% of all lessons having many good features and 70% being consistently good or better.

3.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the

relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are:

- the very positive ethos which permeates the life and work of the school;
- the committed leadership of key personnel for pastoral care;
- the quality of the working relationships throughout the school;
- the contribution made by the support staff to the children's well-being and their learning experiences;
- the opportunities provided to celebrate the pupils' achievements; and
- the effective pupil reward system for positive behaviour, effort and attainment.

3.4 The main strengths of the quality of the provision for learning are:

- the strong and supportive ethos throughout the school;
- the high standard of learning and teaching within the school;
- the good quality of the working relationships amongst teachers, classroom assistants, therapists and the technician;
- the effective collaborative team-work in the behaviour support unit which meets the needs of the pupils with complex social, emotional and behaviour difficulties with dedication and a high level of skill and commitment; and
- the experienced, knowledgeable and skilled teaching within the reading support unit and the outreach support team.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The quality of the leadership and management of the school is very good. The Principal uses his experience and knowledge of the pupils to lead with integrity and commitment. The senior management team (SMT) work well together and have identified some further opportunities for the future strategic direction of the school.

4.2 The school's process for development and planning has strengths and there is a developing commitment to monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' attainments and experiences. Data gathered should be analysed to inform the strategic direction of the school and school development planning. The very good teaching and learning practice identified within the school should be disseminated further. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example, pastoral care which supports the positive learning environment. An assessment of the nature and quality of the school's arrangements for health and well-being practices is needed in order to comply with statutory regulations.

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

- the high standard of the Principal's leadership in education and in pastoral care;
- the school management team who support the Principal well in the development of school policy and practice;
- the effective leadership within the school's support units;
- the orderly and sensible school routines and structures;
- the good working relationships established with parents and outside agencies; and
- the supportive governors.

## 5. **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

5.1 The overall effectiveness of the school shows strengths in many aspects of the areas inspected. The inspection has identified the following strengths:

- the strong and effective leadership and management of the Principal and the SMT;
- the good quality of teaching and learning experiences within the school;
- the effective and consistently very good teaching and support given to the pupils by the staff of the behaviour support unit, reading support unit and outreach service;
- the thorough commitment by all school staff to pastoral care throughout the school;
- the strong emphasis throughout the school on personal and social development and preparation for life after school; and
- the very good attention given to promoting health and well-being.

## 6. **AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

6.1 The inspection findings indicate that the following areas for improvement need to be addressed, for the staff, led by the management team:

- to extend the system for monitoring and evaluation of the learning and teaching, and to analyse all data collected, to lead to further improvement; and
- to encourage and disseminate the good practice within the school.

## 7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 In the areas inspected, the school has important strengths in most aspects 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 followed-up by monitoring visits conducted by the District Inspector.



**ACCOMMODATION**

- The specialist accommodation for home economics has received a partial refurbishment. This arrangement does not comply with the relevant DE Building Handbook regulations. The deficiencies in specialist accommodation need to be re-addressed as a matter of urgency.

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